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40

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THE WALKING DEAD™



Cliff '07
CLIFF

KIRKMAN • ADLARD • RATHBURN

IMAGE COMICS PRESENTS

THE WALKING

DEAD™

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CHARLIE ADLARD

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CLIFF RATHBURN

Gray Tones, Cover Colors

RUS WOOTON

Letterer

Previously:

Tyreese, Michonne, Axel, Andrea, Glenn and Maggie were attacked by residents of Woodbury while on a supply run. Glenn was shot but his riot gear protected him. Back at the prison, Lori gave birth to her child, a healthy baby girl... and Dale has been bitten by a zombie.

For Image Comics



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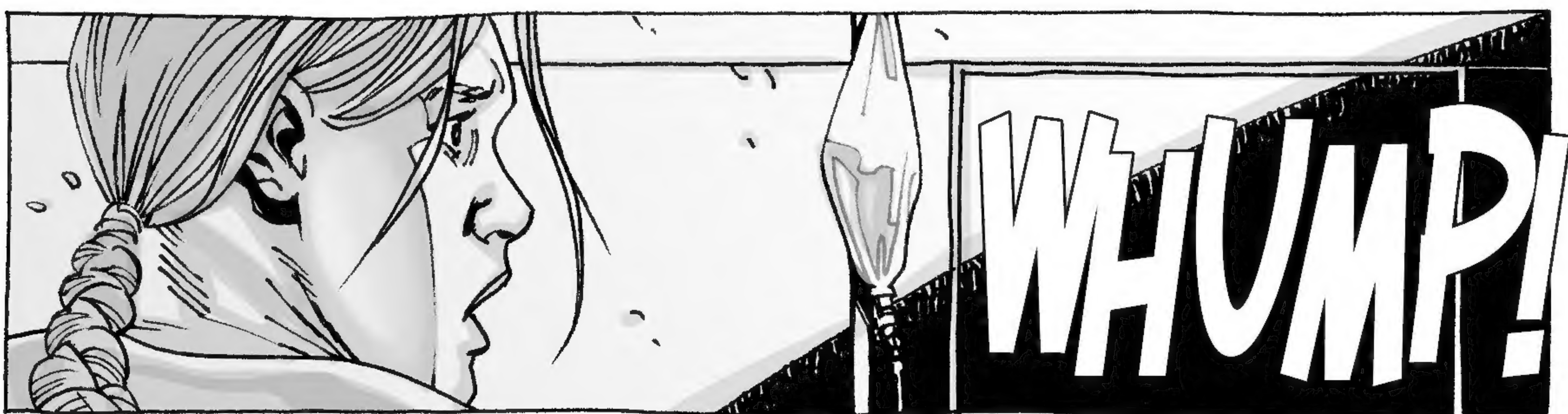
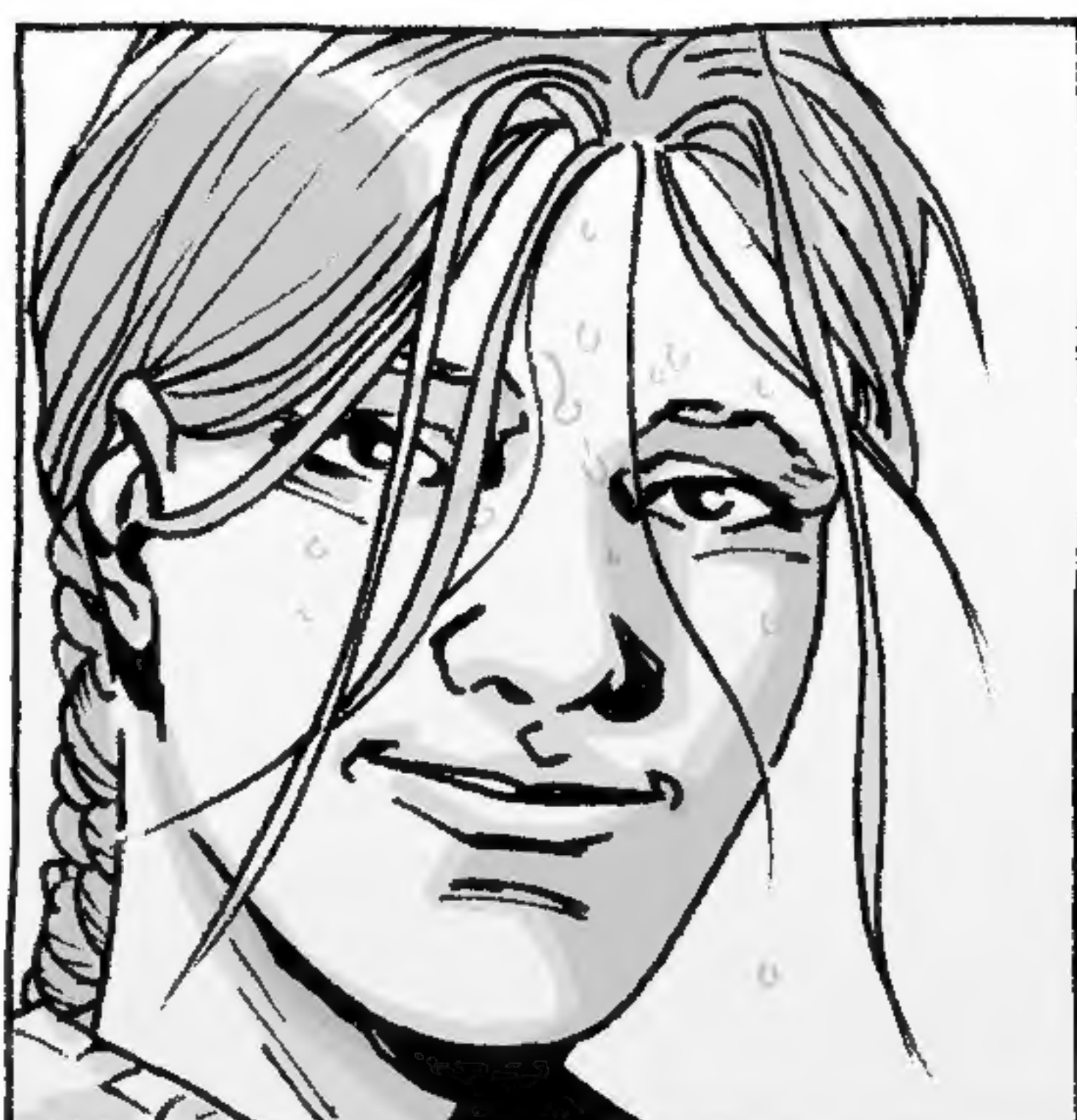
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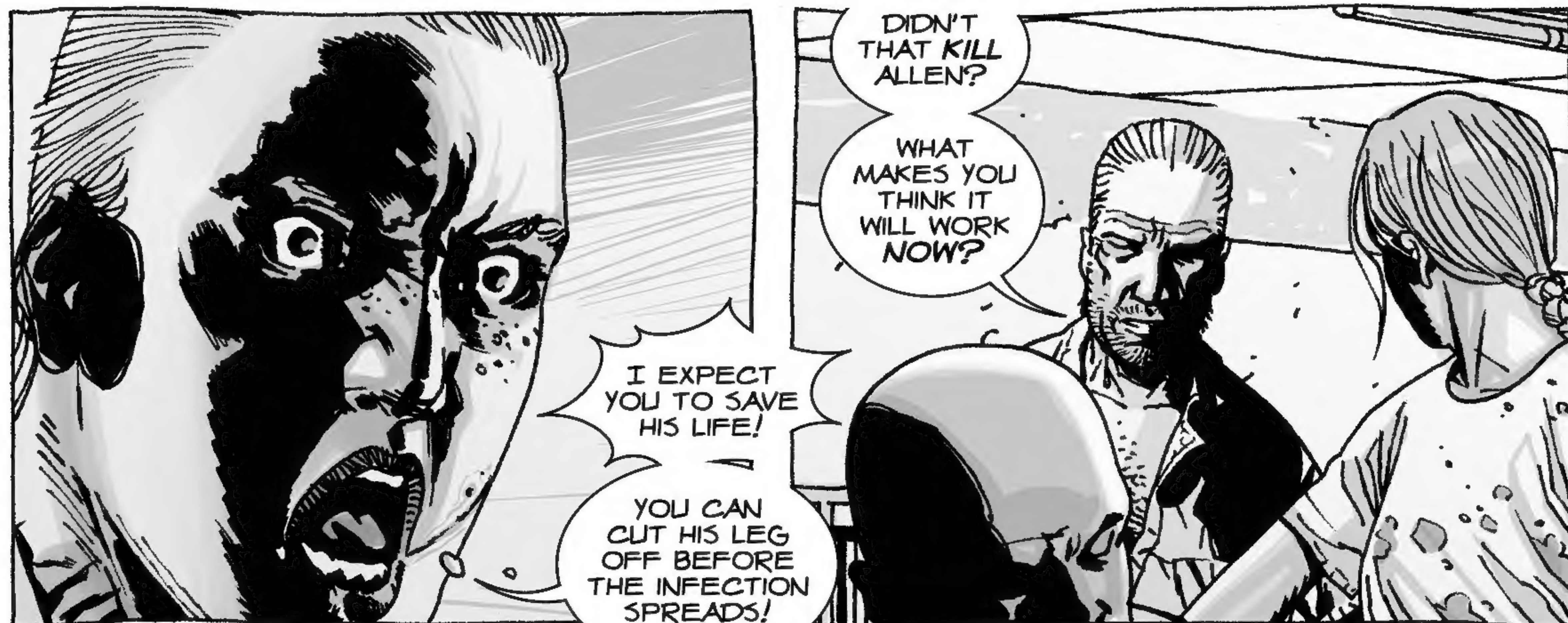
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WAS HE
BITTEN?!
WHAT DO YOU
EXPECT ME
TO DO?



DIDN'T
THAT KILL
ALLEN?

WHAT
MAKES YOU
THINK IT
WILL WORK
NOW?

I EXPECT
YOU TO SAVE
HIS LIFE!

YOU CAN
CUT HIS LEG
OFF BEFORE
THE INFECTION
SPREADS!

SEVERING ALLEN'S LEG
DIDN'T KILL HIM--IT WAS
INFECTION OR LOSS OF
BLOOD--OR
BOTH.

ALICE CAN
DO THIS *RIGHT*!
SHE CAN SAVE HIS
LIFE. SHE CLEANED
UP MY HAND, KEPT
ME FROM BLEEDING
TO DEATH.

WE CAN
DO THIS, BUT
IT HAS TO BE
DONE NOW
BEFORE THE
INFECTION
SPREADS.



YOU HEARD
HIM! DO IT
NOW!

CUT
OFF HIS
FOOT!



JUST--
JUST DO
IT.

DO IT--
NOW...



I'M NOT
READY FOR
THIS.





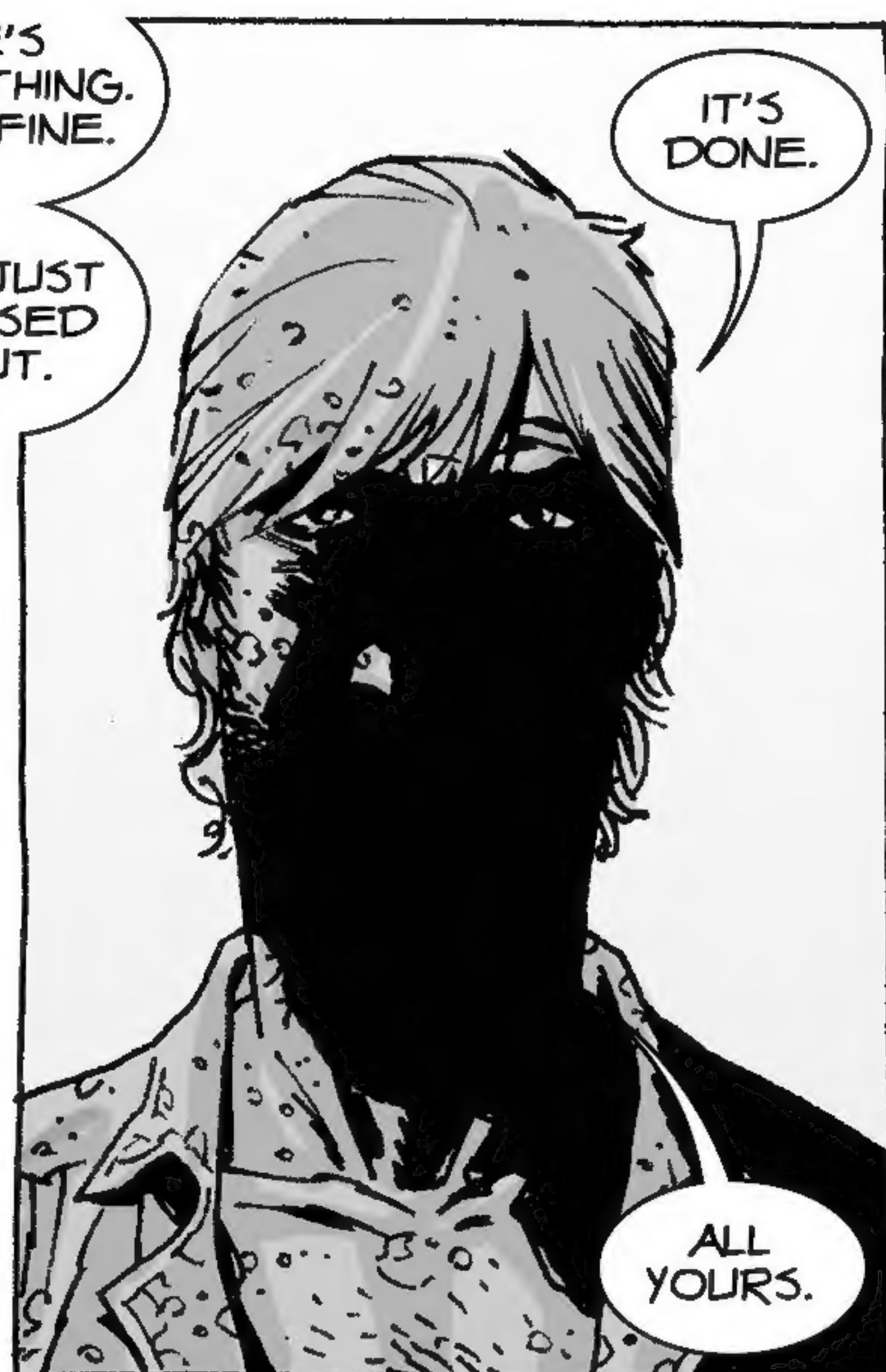
DALE,
OH GOD!!

IS HE
BREATHING?!



HE'S
BREATHING.
HE'S FINE.

HE JUST
PASSED
OUT.



IT'S
DONE.

ALL
YOURS.



OKAY--WE
NEED TO STOP
THE BLEEDING--
NOW! HERSHEL--
GET ME MORE
TOWELS.

I NEED
MORE **CLAMPS**!
SOMEONE FIND
THOSE. WE
NEED TO
HURRY!



THIS
WORLD...

THIS
FUCKING
WORLD...



...



I THINK
WE SHOULD
NAME HER
JUDITH.



THINK YOU GUYS GOT **ENOUGH?** I DON'T KNOW WHY I EVEN GREW A GARDEN--FOOD YOU GOT--WE WON'T EVEN NEED IT.



MAYBE IF YOU PREFER EATING OUT OF A CAN. ME? I CAN'T WAIT TO TASTE ONE OF THOSE FRESH TOMATOES.



I HEAR YA.



HELL OF A NIGHT LAST NIGHT, EH? YOU FOLLOW ME?



YEAH-- A BIT.

HAS ANYONE HEARD ANYTHING NEW ABOUT DALE? IS HE OKAY?



I CHECKED IN A HALF HOUR AGO AND HE WAS STILL ASLEEP--BUT ALICE SAID HE'S DOING OKAY AS FAR AS SHE CAN TELL.



I DON'T THINK HER AND ANDREA SLEPT AT ALL... THEY'VE JUST BEEN WATCHING HIM.

GOD, I FEEL SO BAD FOR ANDREA... I HOPE DALE PULLS THROUGH.



YEAH.





WHEN DO I GET TO SEE IT?

I TOLD YOU IT'S A "HER," CARL. YOU DON'T NEED TO SAY "IT." YOU CAN SAY "HER," OR "THE BABY," OR EVEN "JUDITH."

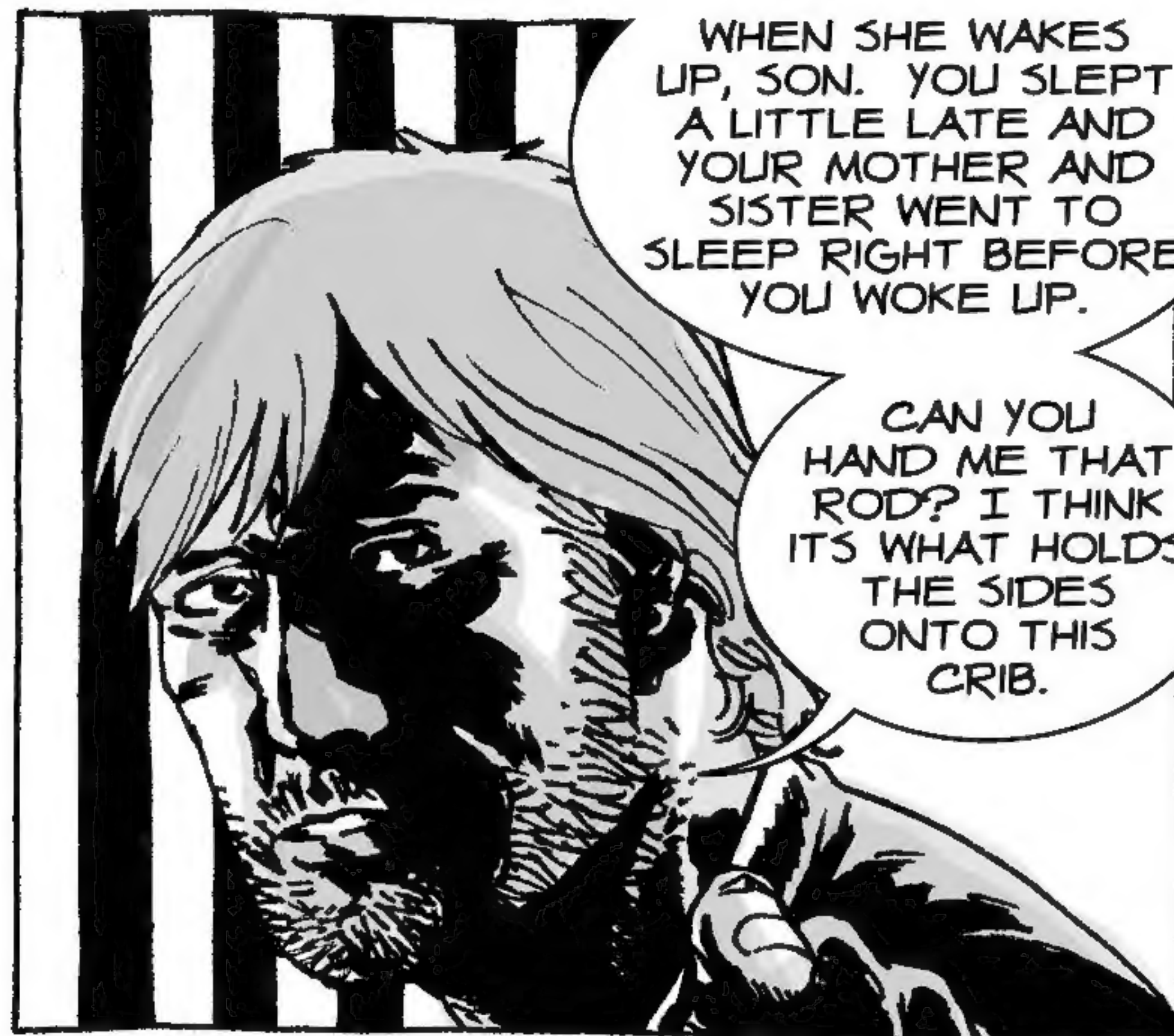
JUDITH?

I THINK THAT'S WHAT WE'RE GOING TO NAME YOUR SISTER.



JUDITH... I LIKE IT.

WHEN DO I GET TO MEET HER?



WHEN SHE WAKES UP, SON. YOU SLEPT A LITTLE LATE AND YOUR MOTHER AND SISTER WENT TO SLEEP RIGHT BEFORE YOU WOKE UP.

CAN YOU HAND ME THAT ROD? I THINK IT'S WHAT HOLDS THE SIDES ONTO THIS CRIB.



YOU'RE NOT SURE?

CAN'T YOU JUST READ THE DIRECTIONS?



I COULD IF I WASN'T FUELED BY TESTOSTERONE AND STUPIDITY. BUT WHERE'S THE FUN IN THAT?

HALF THE FUN IS IN FIGURING IT OUT. RIGHT?



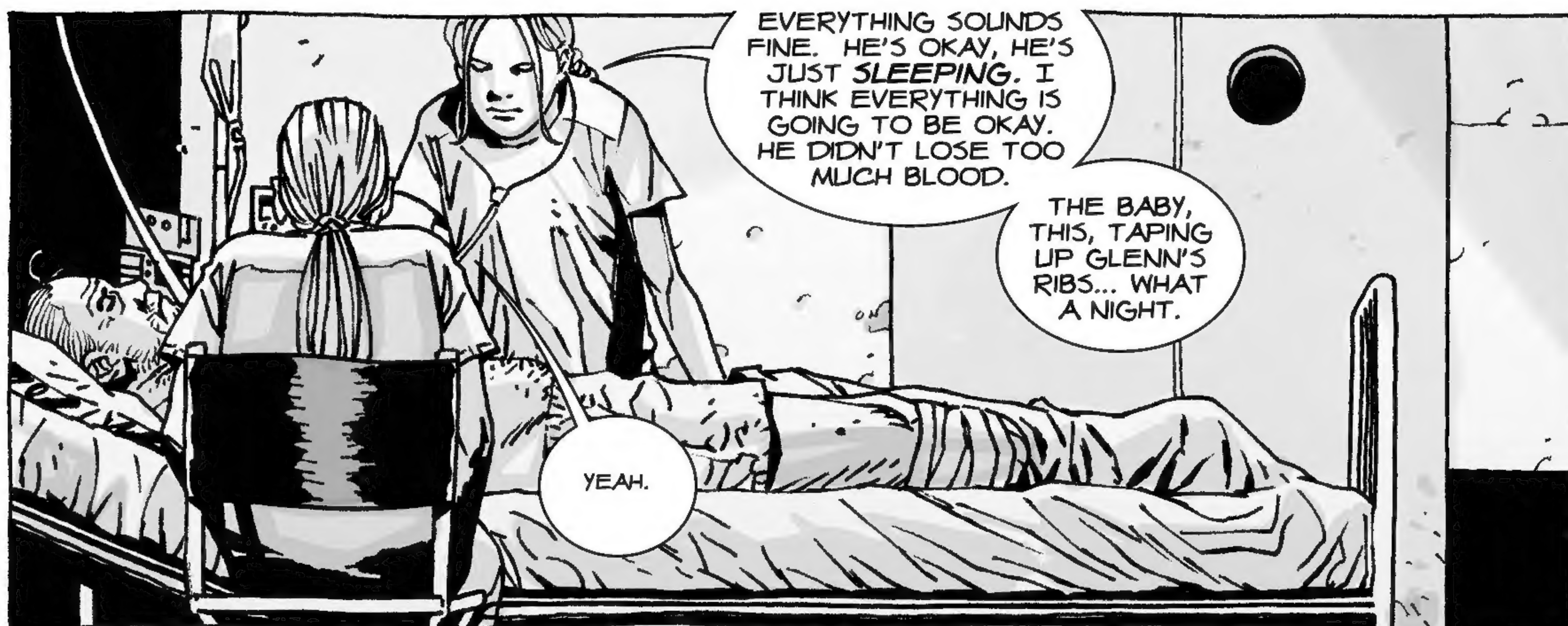
SO HOW'D YOU DO LAST NIGHT? DID YOU HAVE FUN WITH CAROL, SOPHIA AND THE TWINS?



IT WENT OKAY... IT WAS FUN.

BUT CAROL CRIES A LOT AT NIGHT.

IT'S SAD.



EVERYTHING SOUNDS FINE. HE'S OKAY, HE'S JUST **SLEEPING**. I THINK EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE OKAY. HE DIDN'T LOSE TOO MUCH BLOOD.

THE BABY, THIS, TAPING UP GLENN'S RIBS... WHAT A NIGHT.

YEAH.

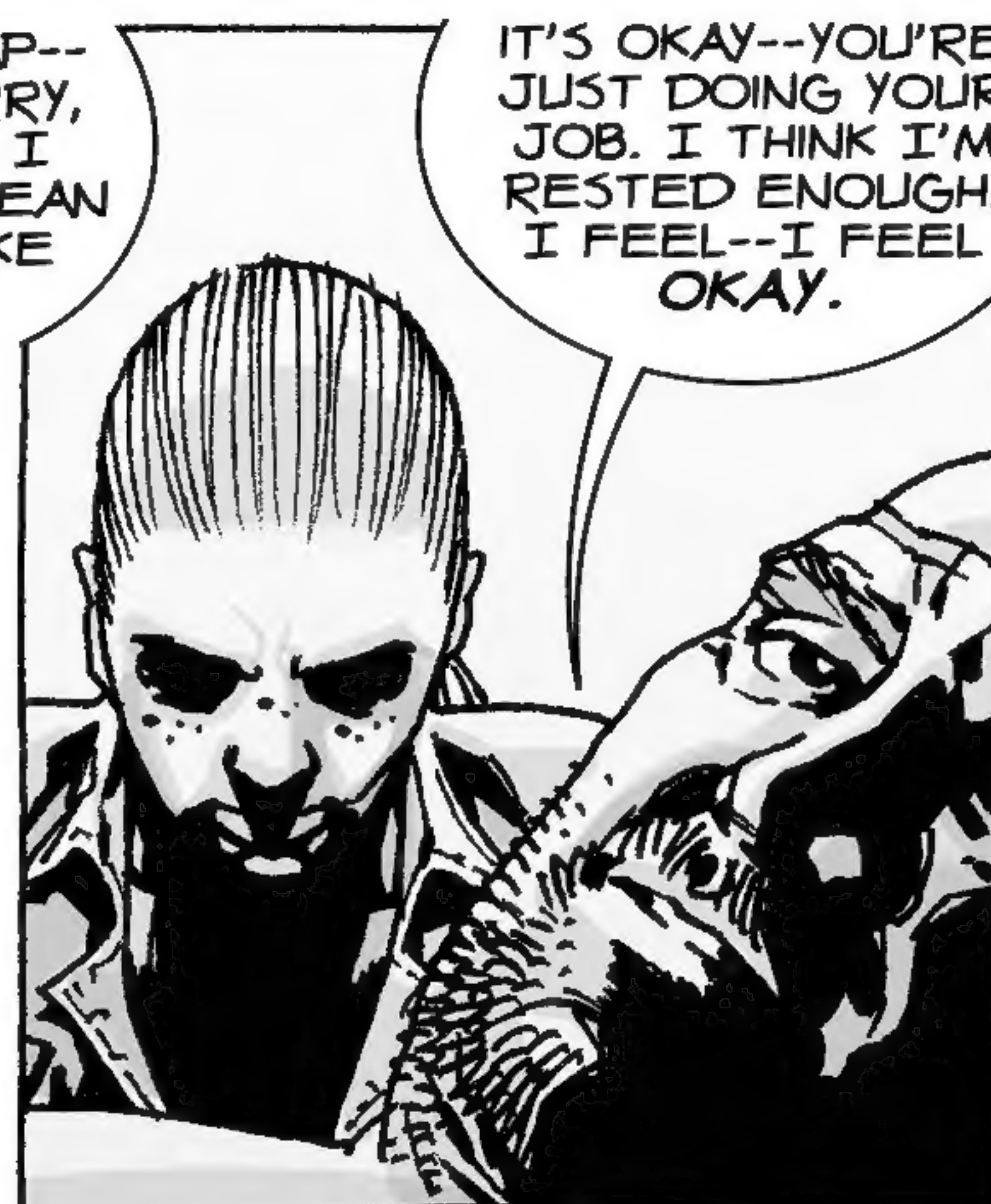


LINGH... HEY.

AM I STILL ALIVE?



OH, CRAP-- I'M SORRY, DALE. I DIDN'T MEAN TO WAKE YOU.



IT'S OKAY--YOU'RE JUST DOING YOUR JOB. I THINK I'M RESTED ENOUGH. I FEEL--I FEEL OKAY.



I'LL, UH... LEAVE YOU TWO ALONE.



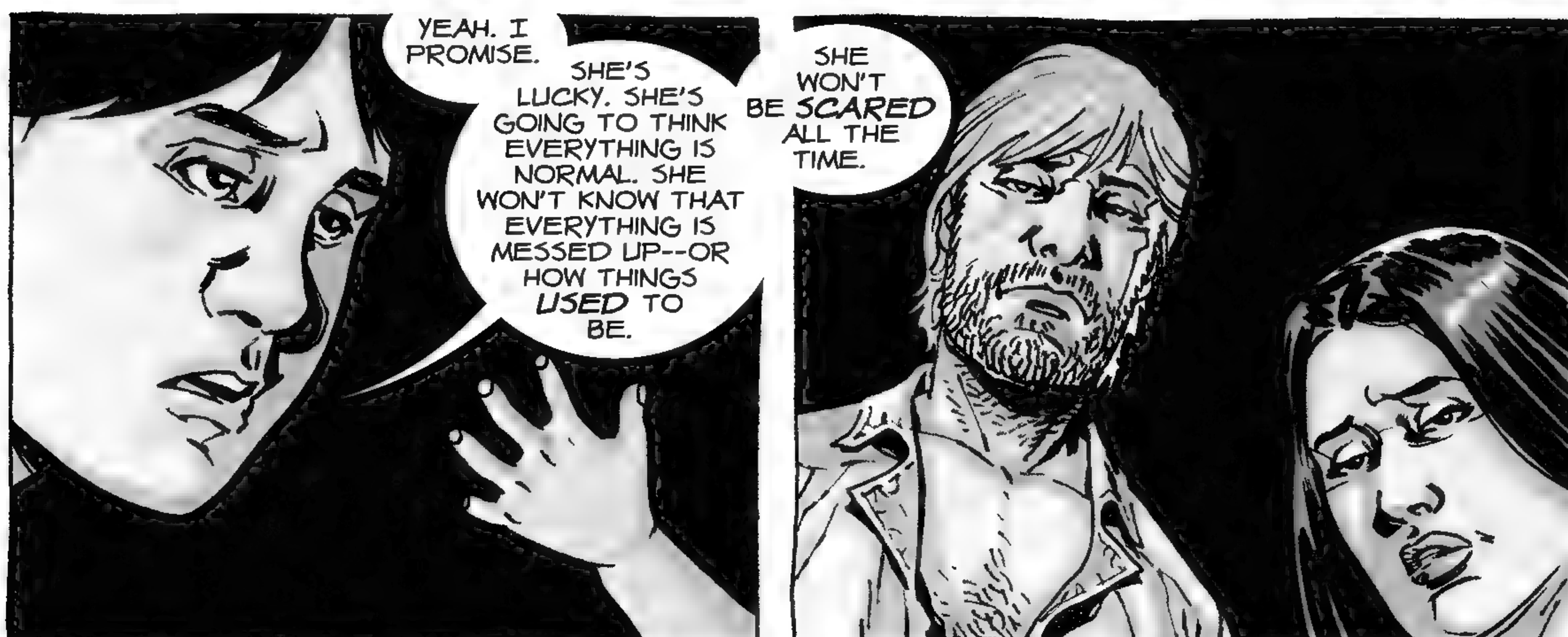
ANDREA?

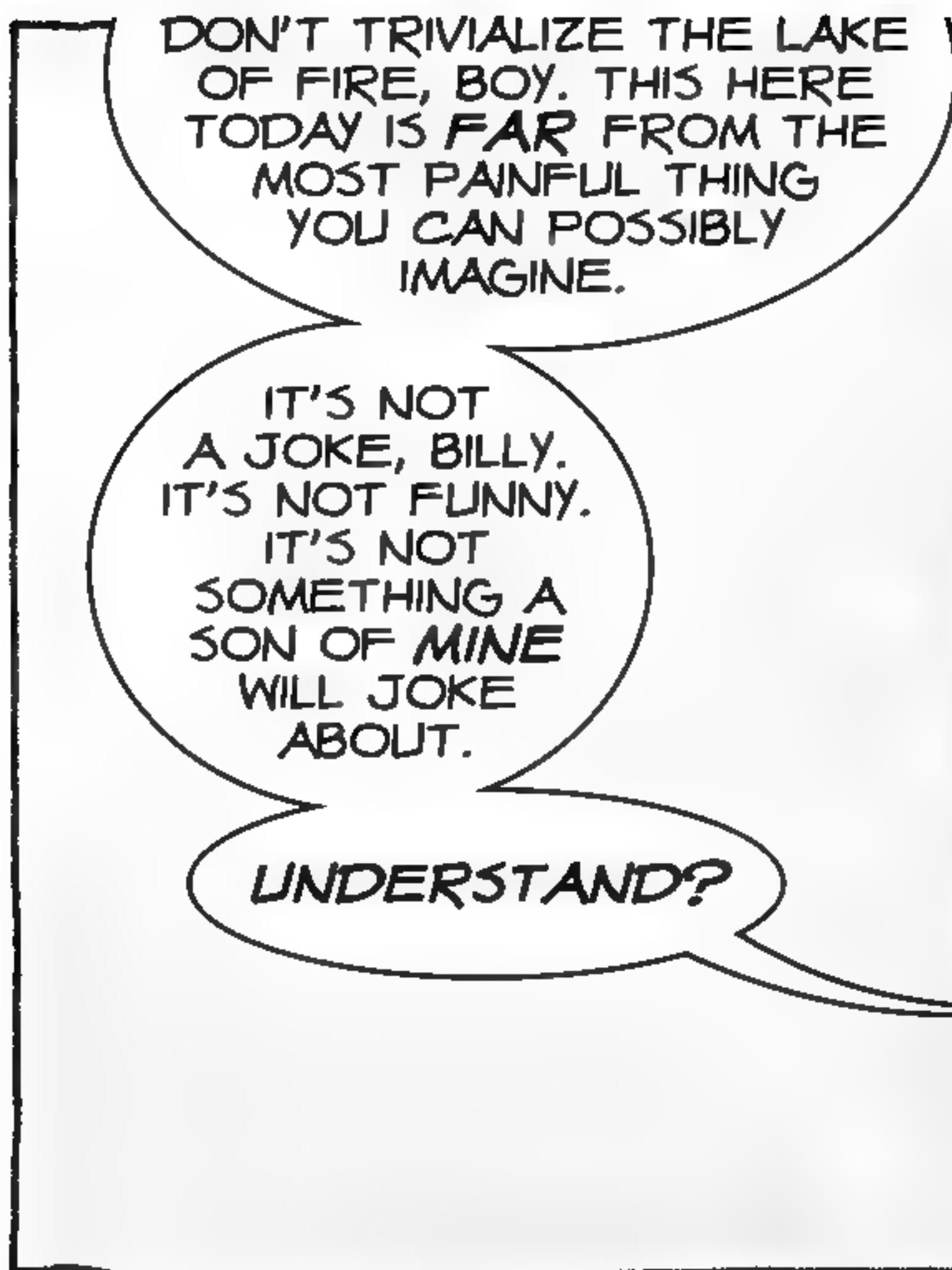
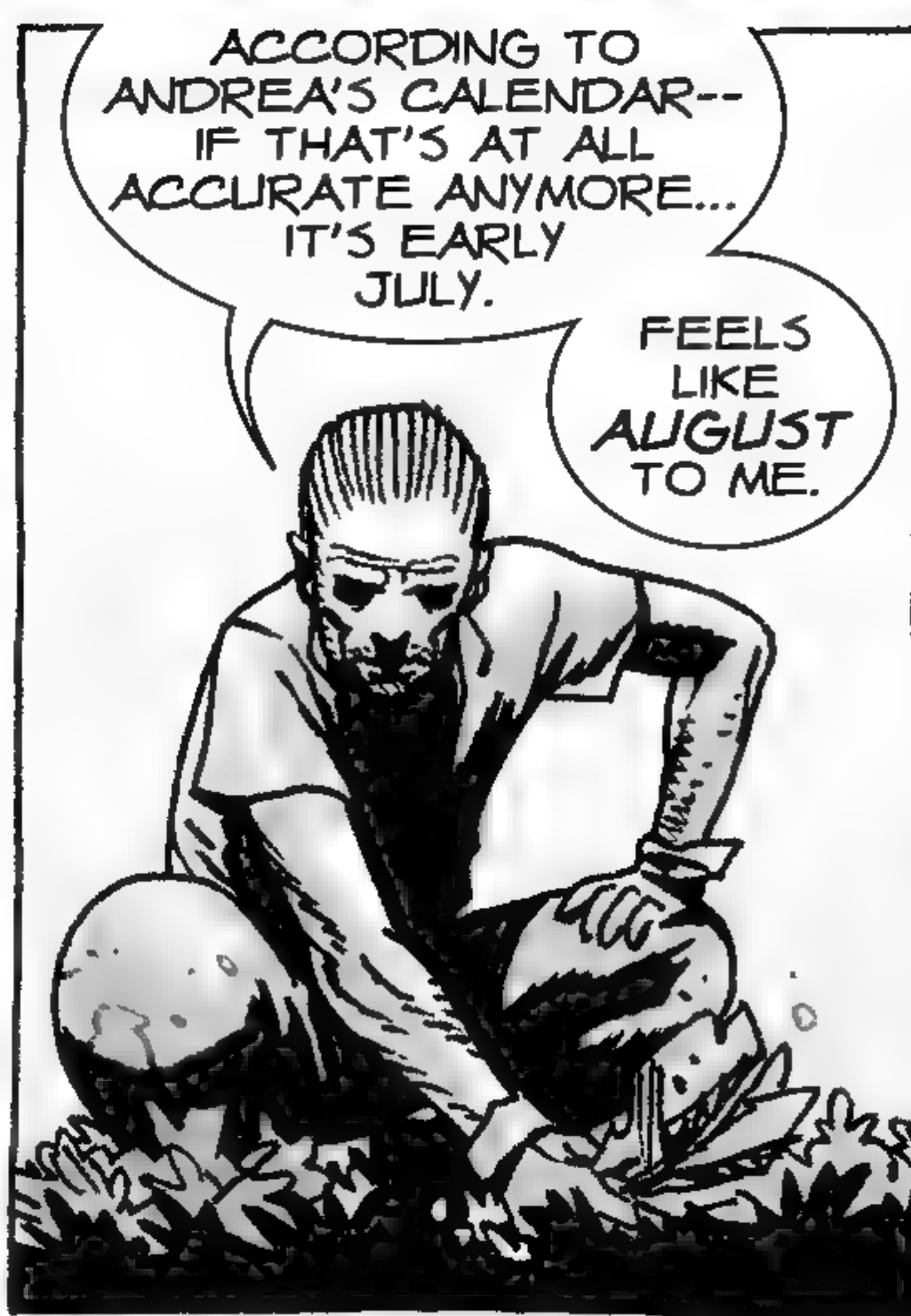


IT'S OKAY, HONEY.

I FEEL FINE. I'M GOING TO BE OKAY. DON'T WORRY YOURSELF ABOUT ME.









OH,
YOU'RE
ALREADY
UP?



YEAH. MY
"ALARM"
WENT
OFF.

HUH, I
DIDN'T
EVEN HEAR
HER.



THIS HEAT
IS **KILLING** ME.
I'M SURPRISED I
WOKE UP AT ALL. DO
YOU EVEN REMEMBER
AIR CONDITIONING? A
FEW MORE WEEKS LIKE
THIS AND THE MEMORY
WILL BE MELTED
FROM MY BRAIN.



SHE'S TWO
WEEKS OLD
TODAY. CAN
YOU **BELIEVE**
IT?

TWO
WEEKS
ALREADY.



I FORGOT
THAT, TOO. HOW
FAST THE FIRST
YEAR GOES BY.
SHE'LL BE RUNNING
AROUND HERE
BEFORE WE
KNOW IT.

LET'S JUST HOPE
THE WHOLE YEAR
GOES AS WELL AS
IT'S BEEN THESE
PAST FEW
WEEKS.

SHE'S
NOT LIKE
CARL
WAS.



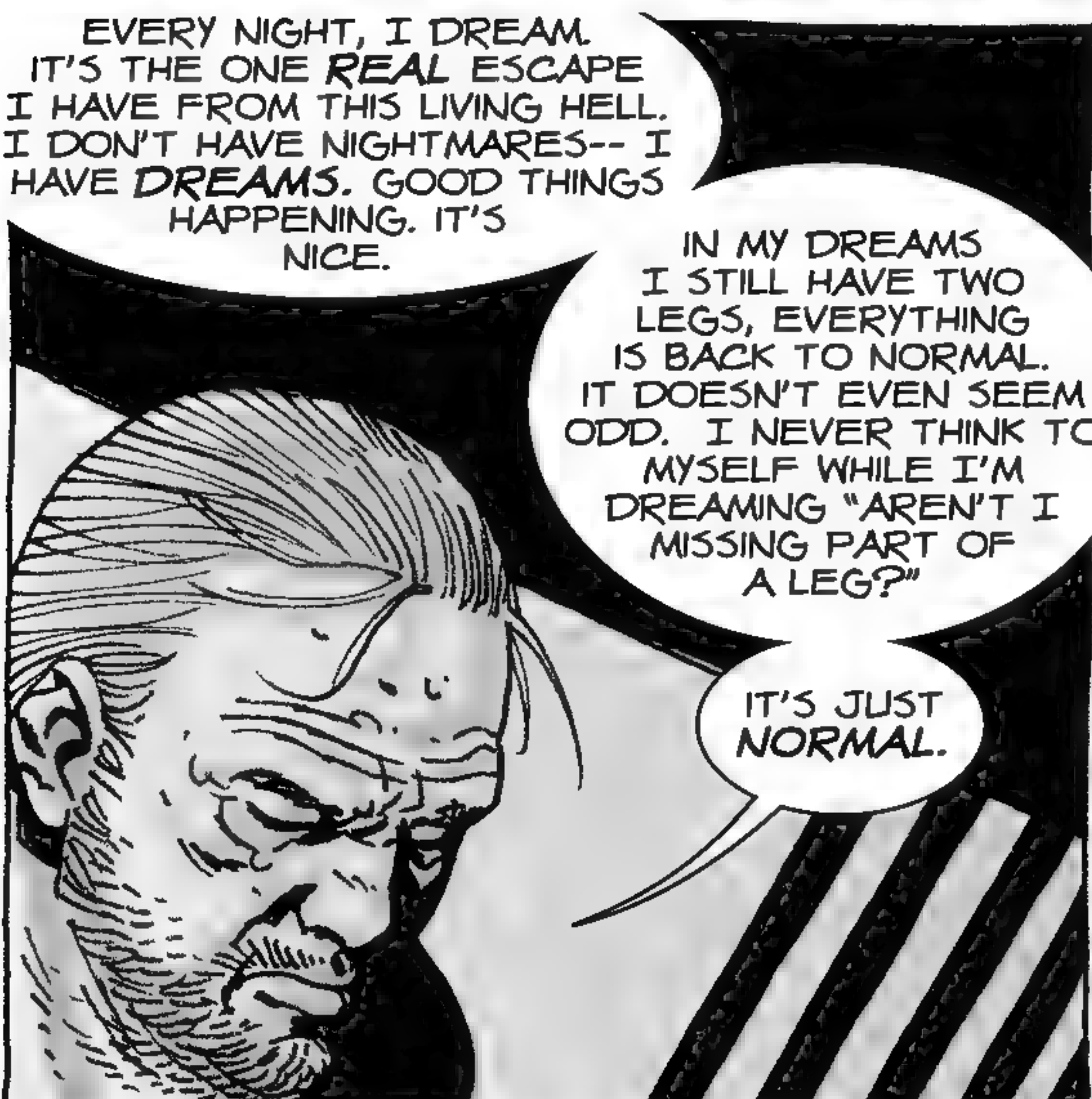
NOT LIKE
CARL AT ALL.
THIS LITTLE GIRL
IS **GREAT**. BUT,
REALLY... I KINDA
MEANT HOW **QUIET**
THINGS HAVE BEEN
RECENTLY, IN
GENERAL.

NOBODY'S
DIED.



OH, YOU'RE UP. I WAS JUST NEXT DOOR TALKING TO CAROL. I'VE GOT A--

DALE, ARE YOU OKAY?



EVERY NIGHT, I DREAM. IT'S THE ONE **REAL** ESCAPE I HAVE FROM THIS LIVING HELL. I DON'T HAVE NIGHTMARES-- I HAVE **DREAMS**. GOOD THINGS HAPPENING. IT'S NICE.

IN MY DREAMS I STILL HAVE TWO LEGS, EVERYTHING IS BACK TO NORMAL. IT DOESN'T EVEN SEEM ODD. I NEVER THINK TO MYSELF WHILE I'M DREAMING "AREN'T I MISSING PART OF A LEG?"

IT'S JUST NORMAL.



SO EVERY DAY... EVERY SINGLE DAY, I WAKE UP AND I LOOK DOWN AND I'M REMINDED.

IT'S LIKE IT JUST HAPPENED, EVERY MORNING.



NOW, GODDAMMIT!
CUT THAT SHIT OUT!
I DIDN'T ASK FOR
YOUR PITY. I WAS
JUST TRYING TO
OPEN UP.



CHRIST.
NOW HELP
ME INTO ALICE'S
WHEELCHAIR SO
I CAN GO PEE
IN A CUP.



WELL,
ON THAT
NOTE--I'VE
GOT A
SURPRISE
FOR YOU.

TA-DA!

I FOUND
THEM LAST NIGHT,
BUT YOU WERE
ALREADY ASLEEP
AND I DIDN'T
WANT TO WAKE
YOU UP.

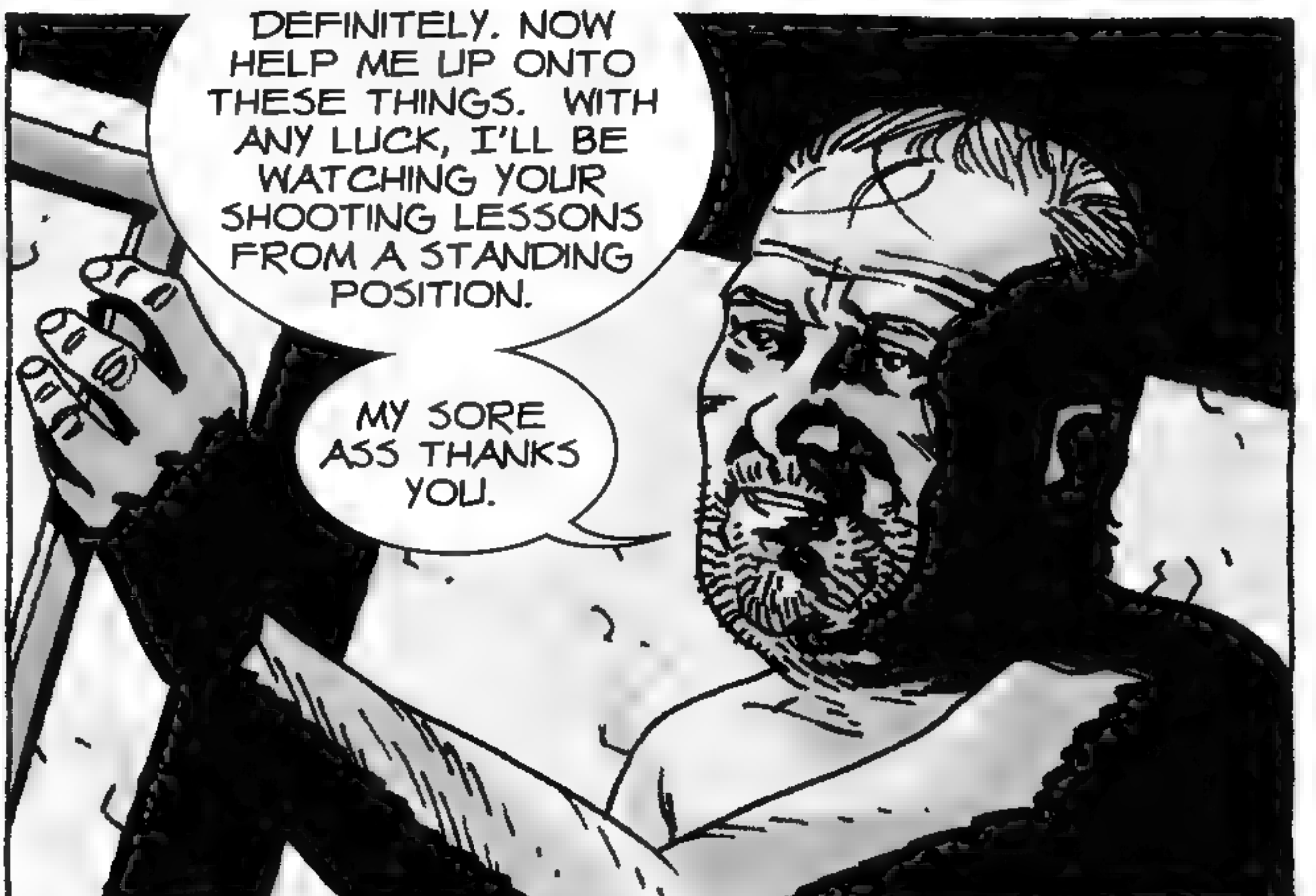
NOW, ONCE YOU
GET YOUR BALANCE
PERFECTED--YOU
CAN PEE RIGHT INTO
THE TOILET.



IT REALLY
IS THE LITTLE
THINGS IN
LIFE...



STAIRS ARE STILL
GOING TO BE A PAIN
IN THE ASS--BUT
THIS IS A STEP
IN THE RIGHT
DIRECTION.



DEFINITELY. NOW
HELP ME UP ONTO
THESE THINGS. WITH
ANY LUCK, I'LL BE
WATCHING YOUR
SHOOTING LESSONS
FROM A STANDING
POSITION.

MY SORE
ASS THANKS
YOU.



RICK, OH, RICK! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

DON'T YOU KNOW NOBODY WILL RECOGNIZE YOU WITHOUT THE FACE FUZZ? YOU HAVEN'T SHAVED IN FOREVER--YOU WERE STARTING TO LOOK TOUGH. DON'T DO IT MAN.

GOTTA, IT'S TOO DAMN HOT OUT THERE.



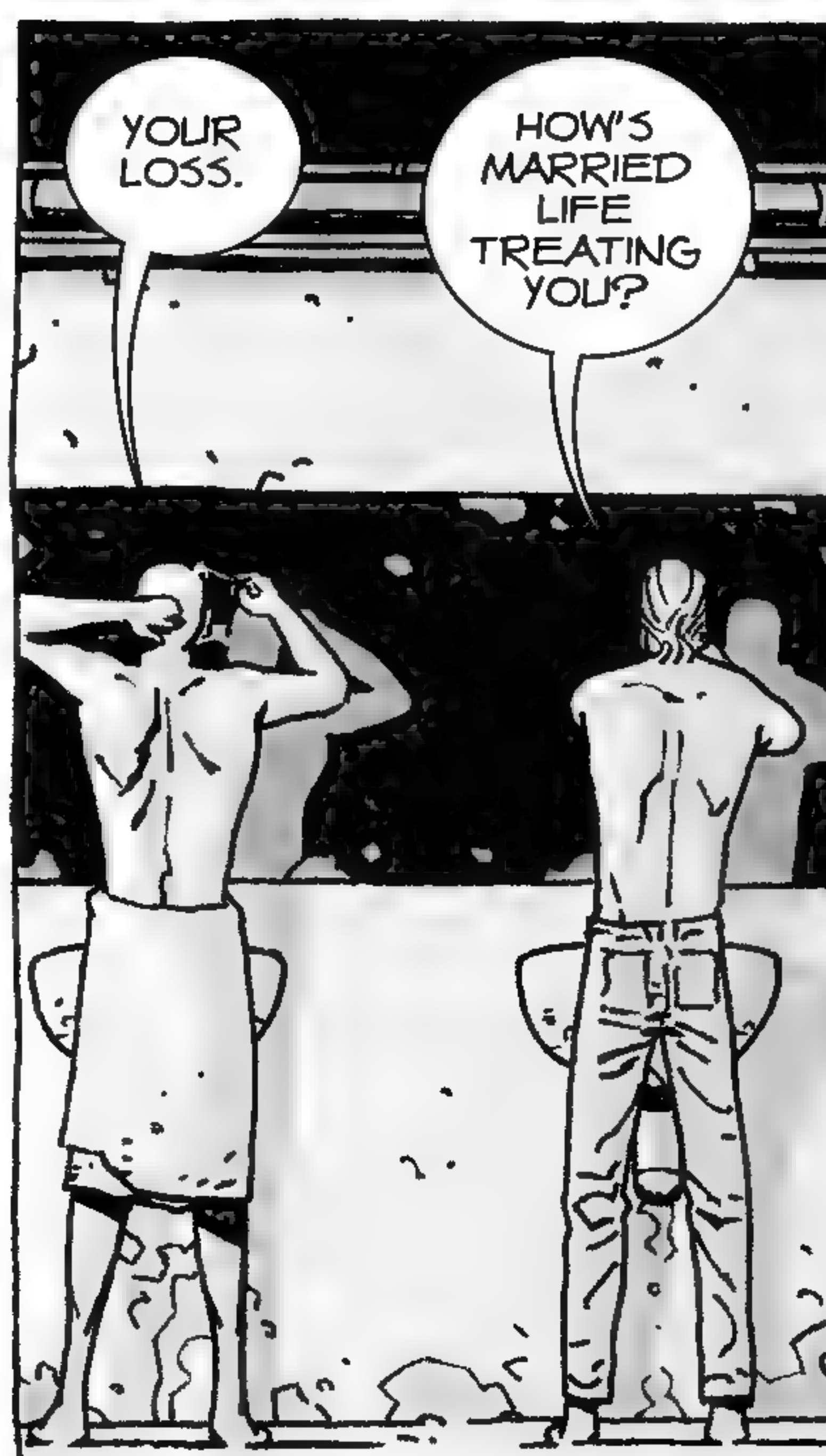
PRETTY SOON YOU'LL BE RUNNING THAT THING OVER THE TOP OF YOUR HEAD, TOO.

I MEAN-- YOU MIGHT AS WELL GO FOR IT, RIGHT? WHY JUST STOP AT THE FACE?



NOT LOOKING TO GET A SUN BURNT HEAD, FOR ONE THING. I GAVE MY HAT TO MY SON A WHILE BACK.

HE'S NOT LIKELY TO PART WITH IT ANY TIME SOON. ALSO, I LIKE MY HAIR, SO I'LL PUT UP WITH IT A LITTLE WHILE LONGER. MAY GET A TRIM IF I CAN FIND SOMEONE WHO CAN DO THAT...



YOUR LOSS.

HOW'S MARRIED LIFE TREATING YOU?



TOTALLY AWESOME. REALLY, IT IS. IT'S LIKE, THE **BEST** THING TO EVER HAPPEN TO ME.

I'M SO HAPPY. IT'S... IT'S JUST GREAT.



GIVE IT TIME...





DID HE
BEHAVE
HIMSELF
LAST
NIGHT?

THANKS...
AND THANKS.
YOU'VE BEEN
SUCH A HUGE HELP,
WITH THE NEW BABY
AND ALL... IT'S GREAT
HAVING YOU AROUND
TO WATCH CARL
FROM TIME
TO TIME.

OH, HE
WAS GREAT.
YOU AND RICK
DID A GOOD
JOB WITH
THAT ONE.

WE'RE
GOING TO
PLAY IN
THE HALL,
MOM.



I'M HAPPY TO DO IT.
SOPHIA LOVES CARL SO
MUCH--THEY GET ALONG
LIKE BROTHER AND SISTER.
IT'S GOOD FOR HER
TO HAVE HIM
AROUND.

SO
SHE'S NOT
ALONE.

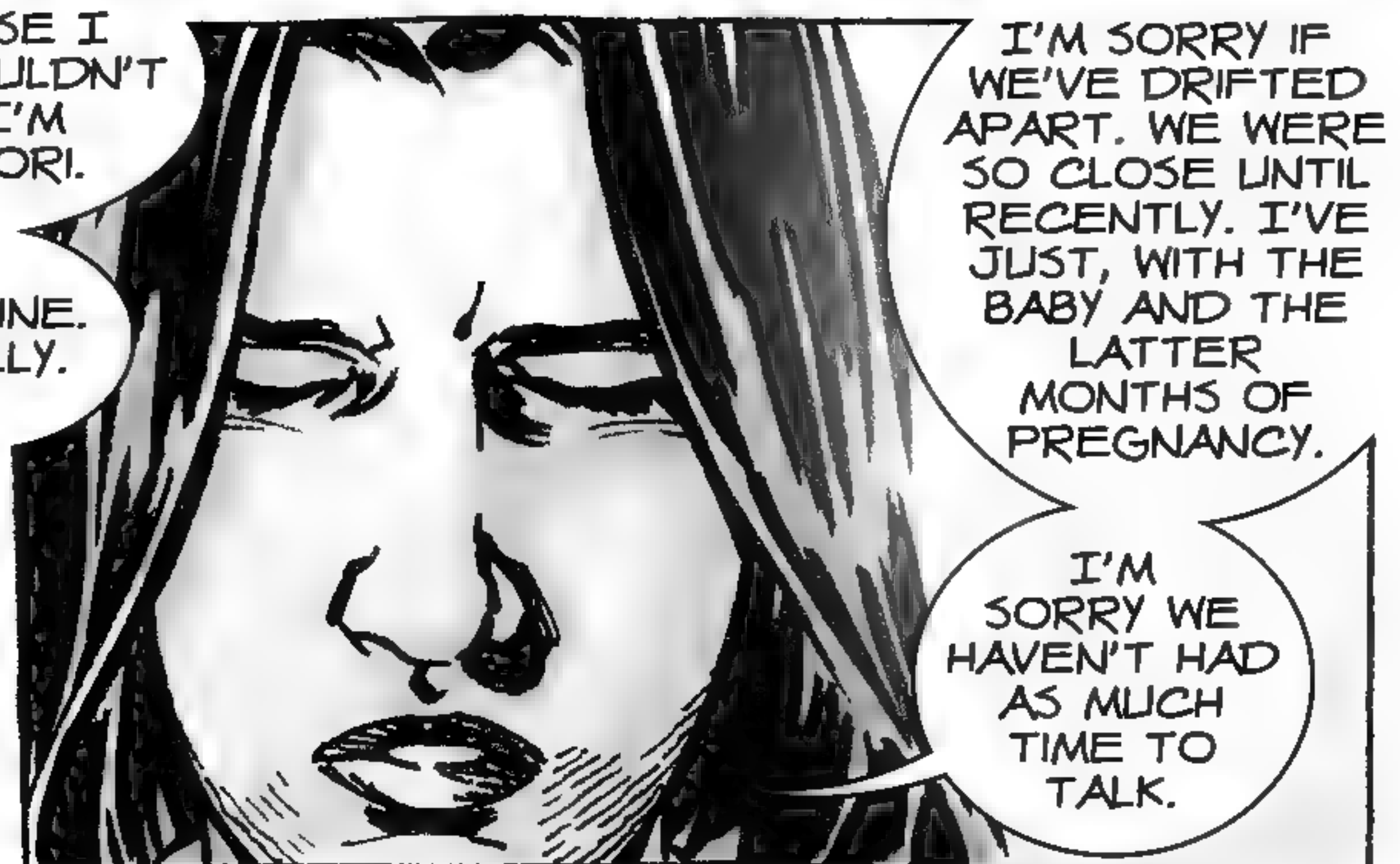


CAROL,
ARE YOU
OKAY?



OF COURSE I
AM. WHY WOULDN'T
I BE? I'M
GREAT, LORI.

I'M FINE.
REALLY.



I'M SORRY IF
WE'VE DRIFTED
APART. WE WERE
SO CLOSE UNTIL
RECENTLY. I'VE
JUST, WITH THE
BABY AND THE
LATTER
MONTHS OF
PREGNANCY.

I'M
SORRY WE
HAVEN'T HAD
AS MUCH
TIME TO
TALK.



I DO.

THERE'S A
BOX OF STALE
CEREAL DOWN
THERE WITH OUR
NAMES ON IT.
LET'S GET
THE KIDS.

YOU WANT
TO HAVE
BREAKFAST
TOGETHER?





YOU REALLY NEED THIS? YOU'VE BEEN SHOOTING GUNS FOR YEARS, RIGHT?

IF IT AN'T BEEN PLANTING OR GROWING OR HARVESTING CROPS OVER THE LAST TWO MONTHS--I AN'T BEEN DOING IT. SO I'M A LITTLE RUSTY WITH MY AIM.

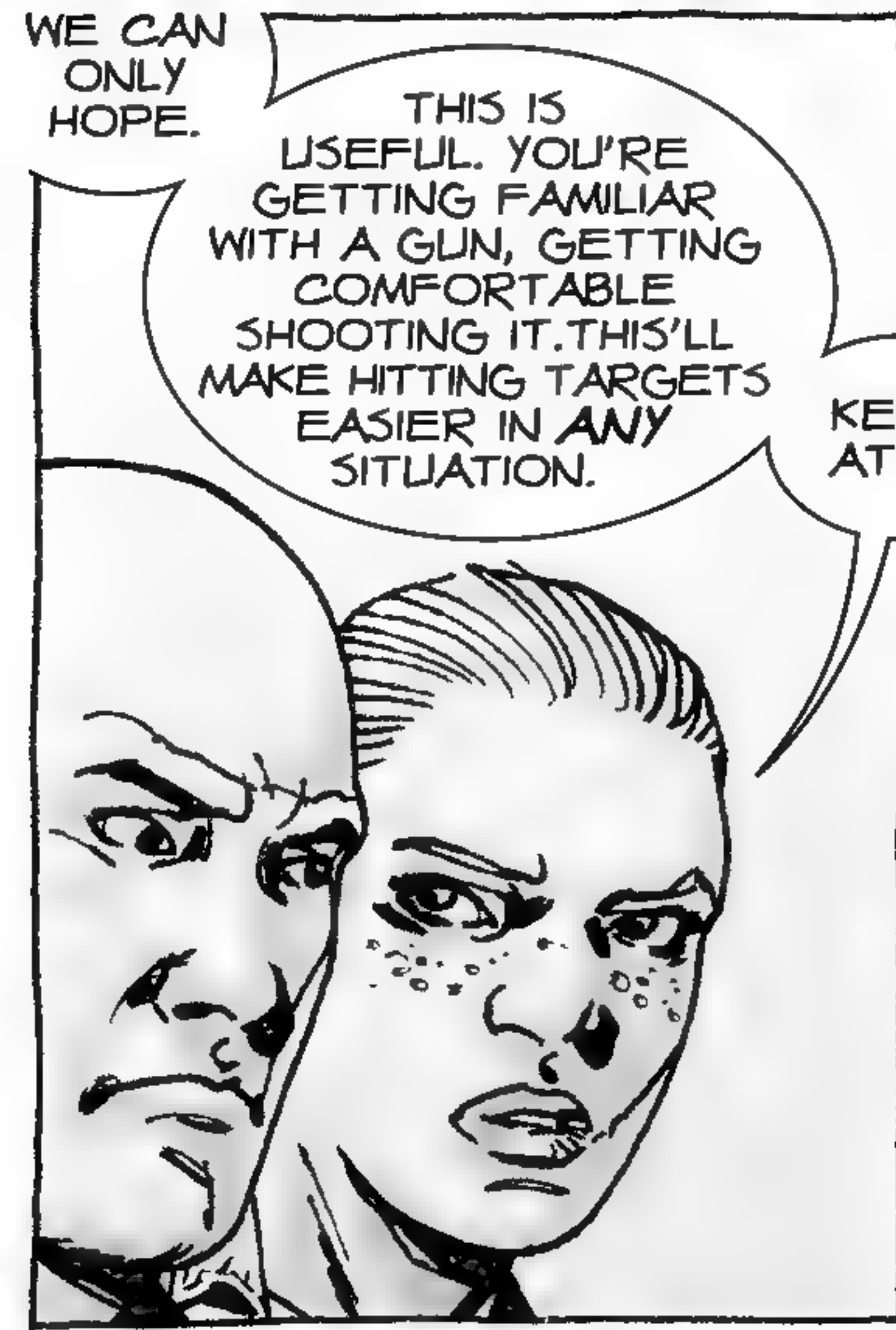
I CAN USE ALL THE PRACTICE I CAN GET.

YOU'RE DOING IT. YOU'RE GETTING THERE.

BLAM!

YEAH, A FEW MORE WEEKS OF THIS AND I'LL BE ABLE TO SHOOT A CAN AS LONG AS I CAN AIM AND TAKE MY TIME.

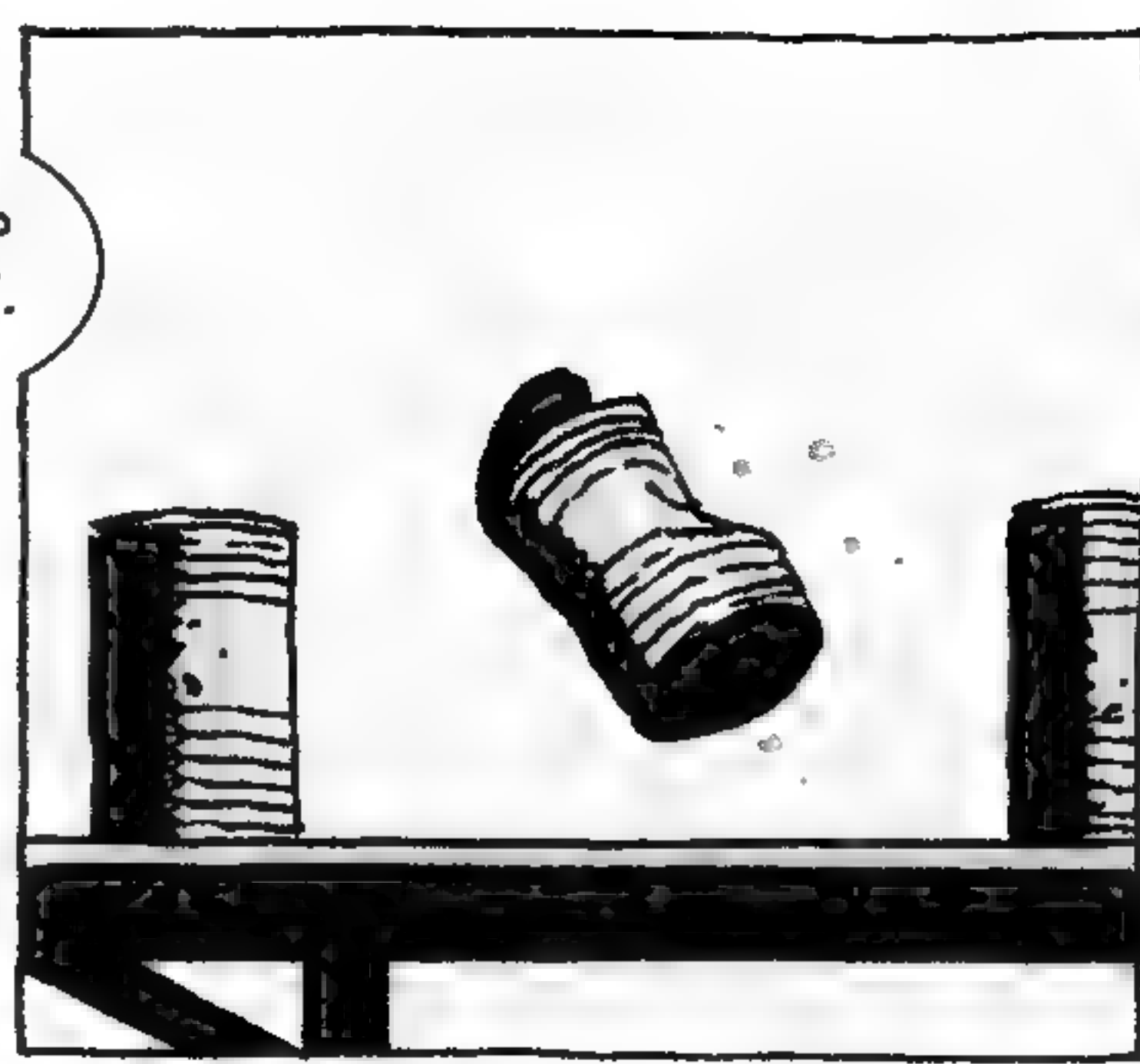
TELL ME AGAIN HOW THIS IS GOING TO HELP ME? WE'RE NOT GOING TO GET ATTACKED BY STATIONARY CANS ARE WE?



WE CAN ONLY HOPE.

THIS IS USEFUL. YOU'RE GETTING FAMILIAR WITH A GUN, GETTING COMFORTABLE SHOOTING IT. THIS'LL MAKE HITTING TARGETS EASIER IN ANY SITUATION.

KEEP AT IT.



PTING!



NICE ONE, BILLY. THAT THE ONE YOU WERE AIMING FOR?

YEP. IT WAS. PROMISE.

GOOD.



PTING!



HAH! ANOTHER ONE!

THAT'S SIX! I'M ON FIRE!

NICE JOB, MAGGIE. VERY GOOD.



CAN YOU SHOW TYREESE HOW YOU DID THAT?

SHUT UP.

THE TWO THINGS ON THE BACK OF THE GUN--LINE THEM UP SO YOU SEE THE LITTLE THING ON THE FRONT OF THE GUN BETWEEN THEM--THESE ARE YOUR SIGHTS... THEN PUT WHAT YOU WANT TO SHOOT IN FRONT OF THEM... AND FIRE.

YOUR COMPLETE LACK OF CONFIDENCE REALLY DOES HELP THINGS. IT DOES. KEEP IT UP.



BLAM!

YOU DID GIVE ME NORMAL BULLETS, RIGHT? YOU'D THINK I'D HIT SOMETHING ONCE EVERY NOW AND THEN.

TRY THROWING THE GUN AT IT. MAYBE THAT'LL WORK.



JUST SQUEEZE THE TRIGGER GENTLY--DON'T JERK IT.

THAT'S IT.

WHOA, HOLD UP!

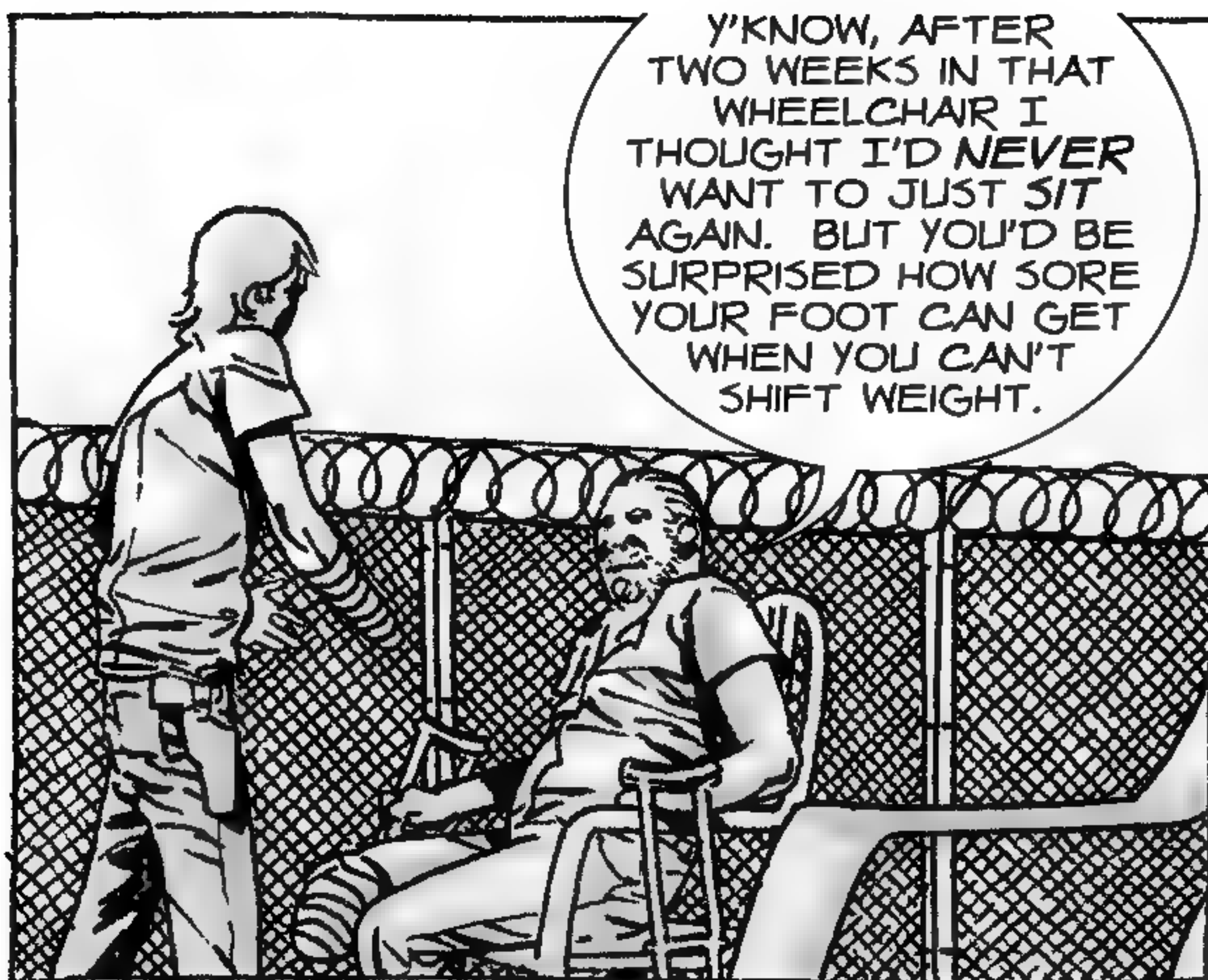


DALE--WAIT!

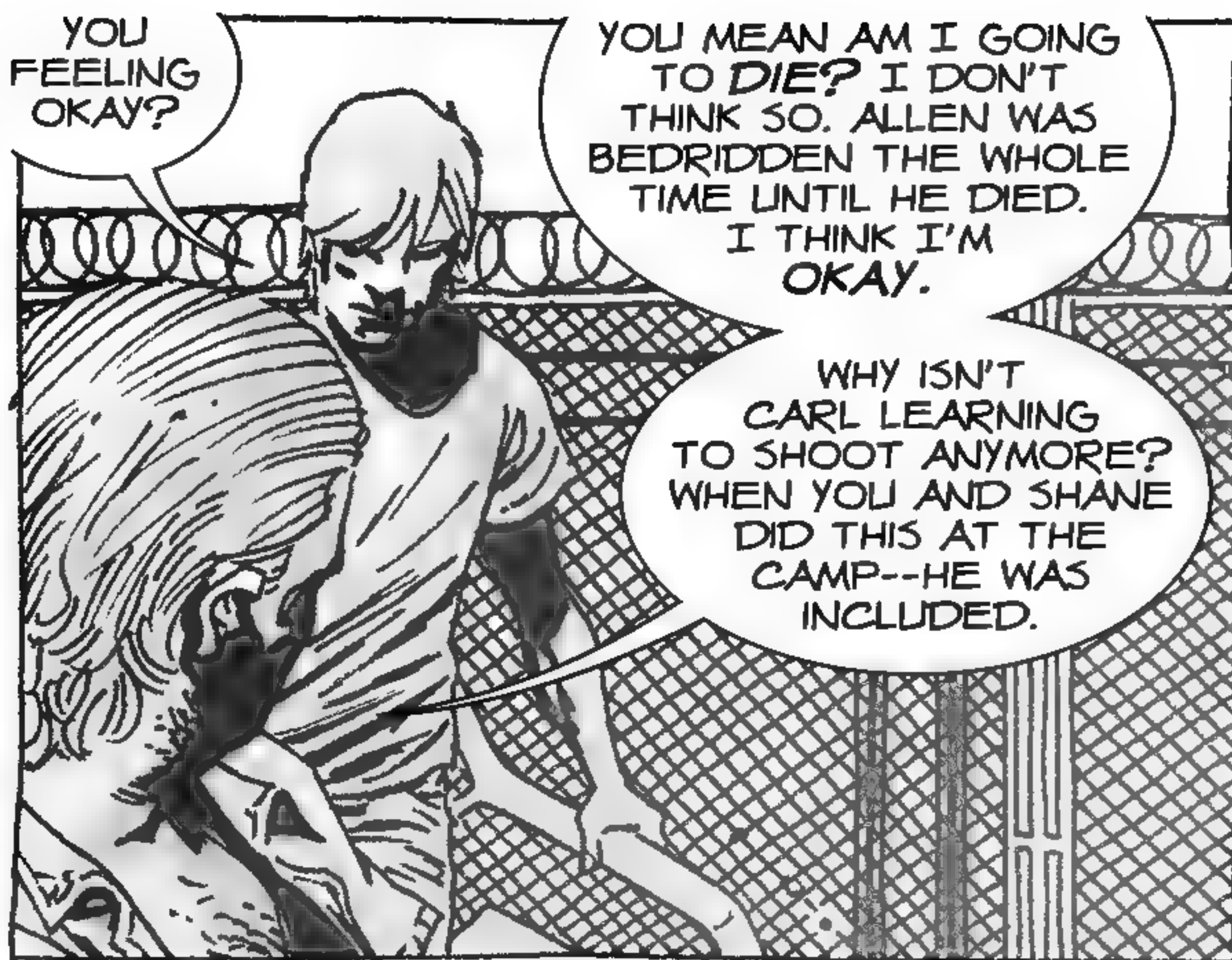
LET ME HELP!

FWUMP!





Y'KNOW, AFTER TWO WEEKS IN THAT WHEELCHAIR I THOUGHT I'D **NEVER** WANT TO JUST **SIT** AGAIN. BUT YOU'D BE SURPRISED HOW SORE YOUR FOOT CAN GET WHEN YOU CAN'T SHIFT WEIGHT.



YOU FEELING OKAY?

YOU MEAN AM I GOING TO **DIE**? I DON'T THINK SO. ALLEN WAS BEDRIDDEN THE WHOLE TIME UNTIL HE DIED. I THINK I'M **OKAY**.

WHY ISN'T CARL LEARNING TO SHOOT ANYMORE? WHEN YOU AND SHANE DID THIS AT THE CAMP--HE WAS INCLUDED.



THINGS WERE DIFFERENT THEN--MORE DANGEROUS. HERE, WITH THE FENCES, THINGS SEEM SAFER. HE DOESN'T REALLY NEED TO HAVE A GUN... OR KNOW HOW TO FIRE IT.

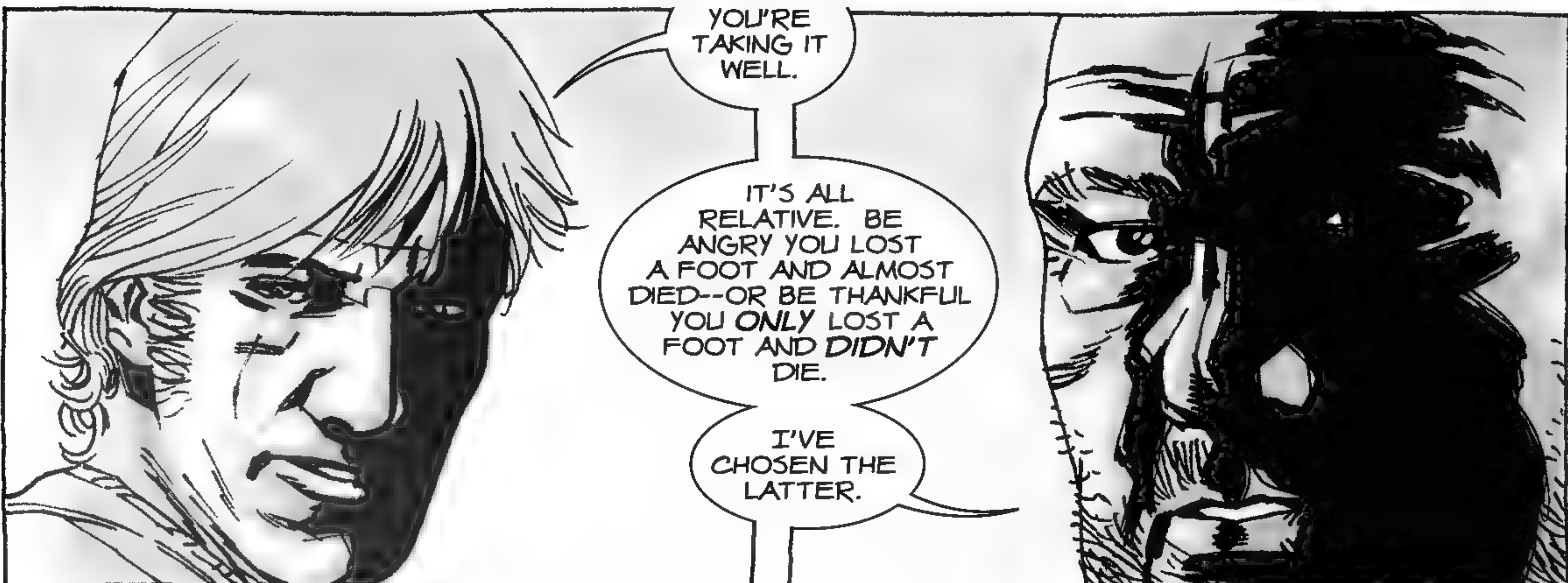
THOUGHT IT BEST THAT WE LET HIM BE A KID JUST A BIT LONGER. WHO KNOWS HOW LONG THAT'LL LAST?

THIS DAMN PRISON COST ME A FOOT.

YOU HIDE BEHIND THESE FENCES FOR SO LONG... **SEEING** WHAT'S OUT THERE, BUT NOT **BEING** THERE... NOT EXISTING **WITH** THE ROAMERS. EVENTUALLY, YOU FORGET WHAT IT'S LIKE.

YOU JUST SEE HOW SLOW THEY ARE--YOU FORGET HOW DANGEROUS THEY CAN BE--HOW **EASY** IT IS FOR ONE OF THEM TO GET YOU.

I HAD COMPLETELY **FORGOTTEN** WHAT IT WAS LIKE OUT THERE. IT ALMOST GOT ME **KILLED**.



YOU'RE TAKING IT WELL.

IT'S ALL RELATIVE. BE ANGRY YOU LOST A FOOT AND ALMOST DIED--OR BE THANKFUL YOU ONLY LOST A FOOT AND **DIDN'T** DIE.

I'VE CHOSEN THE LATTER.



ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, WE'RE HAVING A **GREAT** MONTH. THINGS SEEM TO BE SETTLING DOWN. WE HAVE THE CRAZIES AT WOODBURY TO WORRY ABOUT, BUT WHO KNOWS HOW **THAT** WILL GO DOWN.

ASIDE FROM THAT, GLENN SURVIVED A **GUNSHOT**. THAT WHOLE GROUP RETURNED BACK WITH SUPPLIES AND AMMO ENOUGH TO KEEP US WELL STOCKED FOR A GOOD LONG TIME. YOUR BABY WAS BORN WITHOUT COMPLICATIONS AND IS **THRIVING**.

I SURVIVED A BITE--SOMETHING THUS FAR **NOBODY** ELSE HAS BEEN ABLE TO DO.

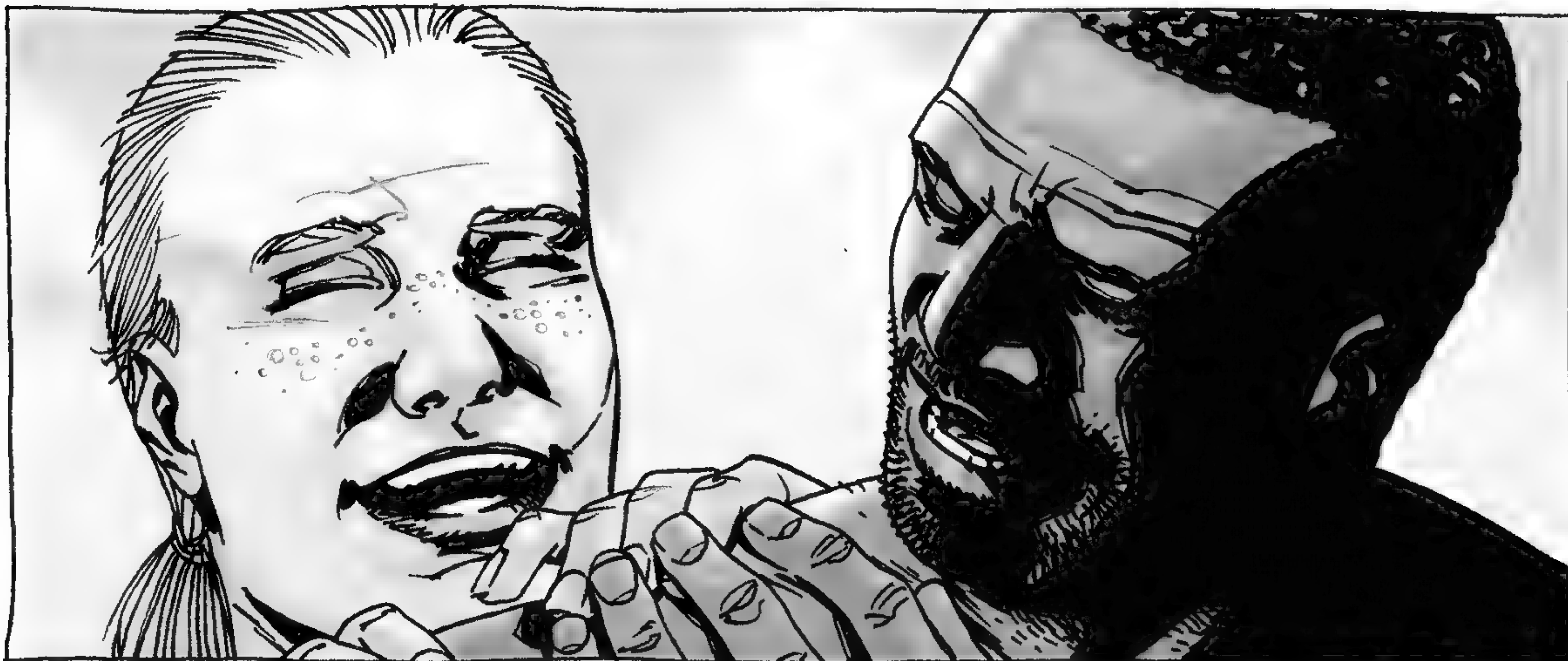
YOU LAY IT OUT LIKE THAT AND YOU'RE RIGHT--**THINGS ARE GOOD**.



OH, YEAH...

THINGS ARE **GOOD**. EVERYTHING IS **GREAT**.

NOW LET'S SEE HOW LONG IT **LASTS**.



NEXT ISSUE

Death
surrounds
them.



CLIFF
A.D. 107

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Okay, I know we're putting out issues fast now. It seems like I'm doing a new letters column every week. Assuming there are no printer delays we will be putting out issues on a better than monthly schedule over the next few issues.

The statue by Clayburn Moore has been completed and should be available in stores very soon, I'm think over the next few months. The second piece of the diorama, an extra zombie coming after Rick has just been sculpted and painted and it's damn awesome. When the whole thing is done and can be put together it's going to be sweet.

When it's all done it'll be a cool scene of Rick facing off against three separate zombies. Cool stuff. Clayburn Moore is a genius.

Now, let's dive into the old mailbag and see what's what.

Robert,
I got into your book because I was bored. To tell you the truth, I really don't like comics very much. I liked "Wolverine: Origins" when that came out, which I also read out of boredom, but I usually don't give comics a chance. I was at my friend's house, I had just finished shooting a scene for an independent film I've been working on, I didn't have anything else to do, and my friend, was ironically enough, acting like a zombie. Let's just say he smokes Marlboro Greens more than he probably should. Anyway, so I was looking around for something to do, I mean, he had no cable, he didn't want to play Smash Bros, and I didn't want to go home because I knew the moment I got there, I would start editing the scene and I really wanted a break, so finally, I saw a few graphic novels sitting on the coffee table. They read "The Walking Dead" and they were volumes one through four. I figured "what the hell, I'll just flip through some pages. It's better than nothing." I flipped through the first four or so pages of the first issue and suddenly my mind nagged me to go back and actually read them, so I did, and to make a long story shorter, I've been hooked ever since.

Recently, I was finally able to catch up to all the released issues and, mark my words, one day, you or your agent will get a call from me where I will ask to have a meeting about making "The Walking Dead" into a live action feature film, that is, if no one beats me to it. By then, I will have a little more credibility and higher stature as a film-maker. It's your story telling, I feel so drawn to it, so immersed by it, and what makes it so bizarre is that you are able to do

this through a medium that I personally don't really even like. To me, comic books have always reminded me of looking through story boards, which is work to me. Not my cup of tea, but your work is different. I just wanted to let you know that you are working on such an amazing project, that even a person that cares not for the medium, loves it still.

That has got to count for something. Oh, out of curiosity, hypothetically speaking, if a film version of your story were to be made, would you rather it be in black and white? I've thought about this a lot, and to me, it would make for a nice contrasting style. I know it probably wouldn't be as marketable or distributable in the eyes of a run of the mill Hollywood studio, but artistically, I would rather see it sans color, like the book. It would also make all the special effects more convincing, and seeing as how there is so much blood in it, it might be the only way to get out of having an NC-17 rating.

Yeah, I don't really know. It'd be neat if it were in black and white, and you've got some valid reasons and benefits listed here, but I'm really not sure. If I had my druthers I'd certainly at least push for washed-out color, like Saving Private Ryan but maybe even a little closer to gray.

I was also wondering, what cover art for TWD do you like the best? The cover art for issue nine is my favorite as far as composition, style, color, and even beauty, but I love the symbolism, irony, and dichotomy shown in the cover for issue 21, especially by the addition of that one lone butterfly (which is probably what Carl and Sophia are looking at).

I really like Tony's covers to 23 and 24 quite a bit. Charlie and Cliff's cover to issue 28 is one of my all-time favorites for sure. It's always changing but for now I'd probably have to go with 33 being my favorite but the covers for 44-48 are goddamn stunning. You'll all see them very soon. They're great.

Mostly, I just wanted to let you know, that from a fellow storyteller to another, I really admire your work, I am drawn to it so much that it's hard for me to think about it objectively. I care about these characters man. Anyway, I hope you print this, if you do, I'll get to keep it as a memento of the first pseudo-conversation we had prior to hopefully working with you in the future.

Sincerely,
Chuck Meré

Okay, you’ve got my contact info future-Spielberg. I look forward to working with you in the future.

Mr. Kirkman,

I’ve been reading Walking Dead since the very first comic, so I’m a longtime faithful reader. I know that you’ve been getting a lot of heat concerning the rape and later retribution of Michonne. I thought that I would give you a female view on this subject... and I’m not just writing as a female reader, but also as a rape survivor.

First of all... to all those men who wrote in complaining that you “took” power away from Michonne during the rape scene (which actually occurred off-screen) - the fact is, that you were showing the character of the Governor trying to take power from Michonne. Guess what? Rape happens every day. Its ugly and its vicious, and its plain evil... but it happens to white women, black women, Asian women, Hispanic women.... well, you get my point? The rapist has no conscience... he doesn’t care about the pain and suffering that he is putting his victim through. And it’s a pain that lasts long after the actual act of the rape is done. One thing I’ve learned is that you gradually go from being a rape victim into a rape survivor. It’s not an easy process and it usually takes years, but the thing is, you’re never the same person again.

I want you to know, that as a rape survivor, I was not offended by Michonne’s rape. The setting of the story is post-apocalypse, with all the barriers of civilization being broken down. Have your readers forgotten the quick breakdown of civil behavior during the aftermath of the Katrina hurricane? In reading your last comic, I think that the point you are trying to drive home is that man - and woman - can quickly lose grip of their humanity in extreme situations. Unfortunately, there are predators in the world who don’t even need the pressure of a catastrophe to make them into rapists and murderers.

As for Michonne’s retribution.... yes, it was extremely violent, yet these readers who are complaining had no problem with zombies eating somebody’s intestines or even the Governor hacking off Rick’s hand? I don’t condone extreme violence, but I also know that its been a part of human history since the dawn of time.

Would I wish to have the same opportunity for retribution with my own rapist? At times, I do have a fantasy of him burning in hell.... He was a serial rapist, and only he and God knows how many women he’s hurt in his lifetime... but I don’t know if I would want to be carrying the emotional burden of killing - or even just torturing - another human being with me. Yet, in Michonne’s situation, there is no longer police to serve and protect, or courts of law to set up trial and punishment. The Governor had hurt so many people in the past, without a single thought of the pain he was inflicting on others, so I personally have no problems with Michonne acting as judge and jury in this case. The only alternative is her just running away earlier with Rick, leaving the Governor there to continue to hurt other people. And I’m not saying that she did it just out of a sense of protecting others - she definitely was making it personal retribution. But who can say how they would personally react in such extreme circumstances?

After what I call my Bad Incident, I couldn’t even

bear to watch violent movies for years - including my beloved horror movies. It took time for me to recover - I’d grown up watching all the classic horror movies - but now I often see horror movies as a commentary on our own society.

I think you really hit home with this when Rick hit Martinez with the camper without a second thought. Martinez should have not been so sneaky and had instead talked to the group about perhaps helping the women and children left at his camp, instead of just running off, so he does share some responsibility for his own death. The fact that Rick later questions his actions and his lack of remorse, asking if he what he’s done is evil... that is what truly separates the type of person he is from the Governor.

Okay... besides all this “deep” stuff about the story and characters... I want to say that I LOVE your comic, and I’m glad that you are not afraid to tackle controversial storylines and characters. Please keep up the good work!

Valeria

Thank you very much for writing in and sharing your experience. I really appreciate it.

Dear Robert,

One of the main reasons I find The Walking Dead to be the greatest book out is the questions of morality which are raised on nearly a monthly basis. In a world populated by constant horror and death, ethics clearly change. Most recently, Rick’s murder of Martinez displayed a sort of kill or be killed ethics. As a police officer, Rick represented one of the last standing enforcers of the old world’s sense of right and wrong. However, at this point in the story, the issue of right and wrong is nearly gone completely. While most people’s sense of morality allows for one to value the life of their family over others, I get the feeling that Rick would perform the most heinous sorts of acts to ensure his family’s safety. Yet even as Rick’s actions become less and less noble in the traditional sense of morality, I still think he’s doing the “right” thing. As a student of philosophy, these gray areas fascinate me.

I was wondering if you have had the chance to read The Road (2006) by Cormac McCarthy. The book has many parallels to TWD. The story follows a father and son trying to survive in a post-apocalyptic world. While there are no flesh eating zombies, the father and son must escape constant danger from starvation and fend off attacks from bands of cannibals. At one point in the story, the author even refers to the father and son as “the walking dead.” Like TWD, hope has been nearly destroyed by the state of the world, and morality has been whittled down to bare survivalism. It’s a great, quick read, and judging by your work, I think you’d appreciate it.

Thanks for getting me into comics.
Greg Theilmann, San Diego, CA

The Road, huh? I’ll have to check it out.

Robert Kirkman,

“issue 37-- which will be IN STORES before the end of MARCH.” Not that I’m bitching but why do you set yourself up for the readers to fill up Letter Hacks with complaints about the book not being on time?

Anyway, great comic book! I've been with you since issue 8 and am never disappointed with the story or

art. You have several very good comics out every month (well, almost) and for that I don't mind the wait. Please, keep up the good work.

Matt Coppins

Well, there's not much I can do once a book is out of my hands. There are a lot of times when

things seem 100% ready to happen... and then don't. For instance, I said 39 would be out two weeks after 38. Now, I turned it in two weeks after 38, so in a perfect world it would have shipped two weeks after 38. But I forgot it was around the time of the big Comic-Con International in San Diego. During this time everyone and their brother is printing up everything but the kitchen sink for the con. So 39 got lost in the shuffle and as I type this, still isn't out, but looks like it's going to be three or even four weeks after issue 38. I'm hoping for four.

Now, 39 isn't even out yet and I'm writing this letters column to send in with issue 40, with 39 pushed back a bit, this issue should be in stores sooner than a month after issue 39, but y'know... I don't know for sure.

I get excited too, that's what it really burns down to. I like to get these books out and I try to give you letters column readers a heads up. I really should stop, though... it's getting ridiculous. So I'm not going to be making predictions anymore. I'm just going to try and turn the books in as fast as I can and keep working.

We'll see how that works out.

Dear Kirkman:

Greetings and salutations, I recently had a fest with your Walking Dead, from #1 to #36 last night.

I usually spend some time with my friends, mostly rolling polyhedrons, watching geeky movies, drinking coffee and talking about you (yeah, you) and your colleagues. That's how I knew that the Ultimate Cable guy had made a comic book about zombies, survival horror and stuff.

At first, I must confess, didn't have much faith because all the zombie comics I had read in the past were pretty ugly (I mean, Resident Evil comic books, anyone?), but I when I knew that was a B/W, old-school, made by a zombie geek comic; well I had at least to see it.

And well, what can I say? I just loved it!

I know that many readers can say at least the same, but the reason of writing these lines is to support you in the now controversial issue about the raping, the racism and the pornographic violence in your comic (?).

Please don't listen seriously to all that aggressive words from the kind of people who need the Comic Code Authority to decide for them what can and what cannot read, I like to think that we're all grown up guys who can difference the reality from the fiction.

I could say something about the behavior of ordinary human beings in extreme situations and illustrate it with the raping camps and other aberrations proper of the wartimes, but I don't like to make politics of an entertainment product which is not oriented to do it. And it won't be anything we haven't heard before.

So what I want to say is thank you for being honest with yourself, your characters and us, your devoted public.

Sincerely,
Juan M. Trillo

PS: Please forgive the broken English.

Honestly didn't notice any.

PS2: I loved the Christmas story in issue #34, and it made me think: what about a backup story of each main character before the zombie infestation? Like an average day in the life of (not like LOST, but well, yeah, exactly like LOST). Think about it.

Yeah, I'm not going to be purposefully cribbing something from lost any time soon. At least not until issue 43. I do try to keep this book as original as possible.

Thanks for writing, I plan to stick to my guns on all issues. Don't worry.

Dear Captain Kirkman,

This issue was pretty okay, dawg. In Idol-ese, the beginning was "karaoke", but the last half or more was "magic". I kinda enjoyed your little backstory in the letters column this ish! 1990? Why such a late bloomer? Didn't most people Grow Up Reading comics? Like me for instance! If you were born in '78 or '79, I was probably reading comics b4 you were Born. I dunno if you answered this question in #37's column, but I'd like to ask what really got you into comics specifically...was it one series, a particular issue? My older brother got me reading comics by, well, giving me some of his to read; probably the only nice thing he ever did for me! I guess if I'd have to go to a particular series that jump-started my collecting career, it'd be Avengers.

My dad got me into it. I'd read a comic here or there before sixth grade but I was really into baseball cards. The baseball card shop in my small Kentucky town also sold comics. So one time when my dad had taken me there--he bought about 12 consecutive issues of IRON MAN. It was the Armor Wars II Mandarin/Fin Fang Foom stuff by John Byrne and John Romita Jr. He had been a huge fan of The Metal Men when he was a kid and he thought IRON MAN was a modern offshoot of that book. I stumbled onto those books and next time I went into that store... I bought some comics with my baseball cards.

If there's still time I'd like you to warn the TWD characters taking the van to look for the...place with more weaponry, that even if they Do find it they might not have a prison to come back to! And the Woodbury guys already are searching and have their weapons. Funny that Walking Dead and JLA Classified have the exact same issue count, huh? Both at #37. Funnier still, they're making a big deal out of Carlos D'Anda and Kid Amazo.

There was a wedding this issue. The priest-guy.. Rick?..even read from the Bible. I guess you do that at weddings. Most religious thing I've seen in this book ever. In the flashback at the beginning--I Think it was a flashback--Shane and Lori were talking about the government? Was that b4 the plague (or whatever) had spread too badly, or what? It occurs to me that no actual zombies, or walking dead guys, were used this issue!

Sincerely,
Andrew J. Shaw

The flashback in issue 37 continued from the flashback in issue 7. So it was during the time Rick was in a coma, but after the zombie plague had started.

Robert, (is "Ye, Gods" played out?)

I recently fired off an email to Invincible (LOVE IT), and now, after having just read #37 of TWD, I'm sending one here. I used to write letters to comics when I was younger, but none were ever printed; however, due to the fact that you print more letters than anyone I've ever seen--and, that you answer them yourself--there was an incentive for me to sit at my computer and try again.

You're in luck. I'm thinking about printing your letter.

I'm 36 years old and have been a comic collector since the age of 12/13. Although I did get into the traditional superhero stuff e.g. Daredevil, Spider-man, etc. I also liked darker, more mysterious material, as well. When Frank Miller did his run on Daredevil with Mazzuchelli, it appealed to me so much more than the ad nauseum repetitions of a new super villain every issue with no true feeling of consequence. These days, titles like Sin City, 100 bullets, Criminal, etc. jazz me up a lot more than crossover after crossover of mindless men-in-tights drivel. This love for more adult oriented storytelling, combined with my love for horror movies and great advice from 2 wise, wise men (what's up, Neil and Chris!!) brought me to TWD.

I'd love to go on and on about how much fun I have reading this book, Robert, but it's nothing you haven't heard before. What I would like to address briefly is my continued hope that you will NEVER, EVER pull any punches or tame your material down because a bunch of sissy-boys might get offended or some sanctimonious pseudo-intellectual might send you some whiny screed on how this or that is a reflection of societal oppression blah, blah, blah. I'm referring, of course, to some of the reactions you got to your depiction of the whole Governor/Michonne situation. Especially, when some people tried to speak for your inner thoughts and beliefs, particularly by accusing you of being sexist/racist. I'm impressed by how you handled those letters by not collapsing into a heap of jelly and defending your story. This is a cruel world--both in the real world and, especially, in the TWD one--and bad things happen. It's unfortunately symptomatic of our PC society to label anything perceived as negative towards certain individuals/groups as racist, etc. Not to overstate it, but how dare they pretend to know what you think, Robert, or, for that matter, what the rest of us do!

Anyways, I've got so much more to say to praise the unbelievable work that you, Charlie, Cliff and Rus are doing on this title, but I'd like to get printed, so here are some numbered questions:

I do print some letters that don't have questions... I swear.

1. Is Charlie as amped about doing this book forever as you yourself are? Man, I hope so. His artwork is EXACTLY how this book needs to look!

I wouldn't say he's as amped as me, but he's definitely on board for the long haul. I know he enjoys it but I wouldn't presume to have him on board for life. He's not going anywhere any time soon.

2. For the first time, in issue #37, we got somewhat of a flashback with Lori thinking about Shane. Does this mean you may use flashbacks to give us--FINALLY--some backstory on characters like Michonne? We're dying to read it, man!

The first flashback was actually at the beginning of issue 7. This is the second. I don't plan on using them too often but maybe every now and then--and only when the event ties in with what I've got going on in the main story.

3. In the interview at the back of #37, you mentioned that at the beginning you had the story mapped out up to its current position. Do you have the next 37 more or less figured out?

Oh, yeah. Definitely. There is also stuff that would be taking place way after this stuff happening now that I had planned in the beginning. It was a very rough outline but I always knew I was leading up to this stuff. And y'know, since then I've been plotting further and further ahead as I go along... of course--there's still stuff I always make up on the fly while I'm writing... it keeps things fresh.

4. Will Carl ever take his hat off? Dale, I understand, because it designates him clearly as "Dale", but Carl?

He takes it off from time to time.

5. Can you promise us loyal readers that you will tell the story you want to tell for us grown-ups here, and not balk at showing terrible things? I know you haven't yet, but I hope the whole tempest over the torture thing hasn't left you gun-shy.

Trust me, there's more to come on that front. By the time we reach issue 50 it'll be clear that I'm not pulling any punches.

Thank you for your time and for doing your part to keep comics a legitimate medium!

By the way, I also love the Ant-man title and anxiously look forward to The Wolf-man!!

Jonathan Radmer

Yay, The Irredeemable Ant-Man and The Astounding Wolf-Man! Very cool, thanks for reading.

Kirkman--

Issue #37! Yay!

Yay-fuckin'-yay-yay! Really beautiful work, all around.

QUESTION! Do all the character moments get written

at the same speed as the plot-driven stuff? Or do they accrue over time?

Good stuff,
Andrew Garcia-Price

Hm. Well, the issues themselves in script form get written chronologically almost as you would read it. I start on page one and write until I'm on page 22 but before that there's a plot stage where I map everything out on paper. The character stuff is scrawled out in notes and sometimes things get shifted back into another issue to save space or so I can lead up to a moment. The plot stuff and the character stuff is more often than not just written at the same time as I go along. Does that explain it at all?

It would be very cool if you guys decide to include a poster in one of the upcoming issues.

I really want one.

Good job guys, this comic is great!

Jose Pinal

Well, there's not a poster contained in this issue, but there IS an ad for one. You'll find it shortly after this letters column. You can buy it in whatever store you purchased this comic. Tell them Dave sent you!

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I am writing this to let you know that I love this book. I just recently got on board and started with the trades and quickly got caught up so now I'm up to issue 37. This series is one of the best out there! I think one of the better sequences I've read thus far is the one with Rick questioning his humanity after he killed Martinez who was essentially spying for the governor and his bitches. I loved it and it spoke to me. I could conceive of myself, put in a similar situation, doing the exact same thing for my family. Making those choices wouldn't be so tough once you put it in perspective.

I also have a gripe to pick with all those people who wrote in and complained about the extended torture scene with Michonne. I don't get what they are upset about at all. The book is called The Walking Dead not The Walking Unliving Enjoying Lunch In Your Garden. **(but maybe it should be? -Robert)** First and foremost this is a zombie book by the title alone. One should expect all the violence and agony that goes into something like that. And like you said, if people get turned off by one book then what's that say about them? I myself loved the torture scene and I felt it was very gratifying in every respect. You made the governor a complete prick and we, well most of us, wanted to see that extended torture scene to see him get his comeuppance. I feel that those people who wrote in complaining about it are part of the conservative America that I despise. I mean come on, if pushing the boundaries with some sex scenes isn't going to set off alarms with these people why should a torture scene? The way I see it is it's hypocritical of them. Comic artists and writers have been fighting the good fight for freedom of expression for a long time and you can't get your panties in a bunch with a title such as this if you have a problem with a little violence. I say keep up the good work and giving us great stories month in and month out.

Well, in defense of the people who balked at the horror... this series, according to the sales figures, is reaching a pretty broad audience. I've gotten mail from people who just read Marvel books who have given this title a shot. So, we're not ALL horror fans here, who are used to seeing and hearing far worse than what's portrayed here in our favorite movies.

And that's okay. I'd like this book to appeal to as wide an audience as possible. And it's COOL that stuff in this book can make people flinch and respond so strongly. Doesn't mean I'm going to quit doing such things, just to appease those fans... just like I'm not going to put in more gore and more zombie action just to appease those fans.

This book is what it is, and really, the most important member of the audience is myself. Meaning, if I don't like it, I can't write it... so thus far I've just been doing what interests ME at whatever given moment and I'll probably just continue doing that, because that keeps me interested in the series and keeps me interested in writing scripts.

Keeping Charlie interested isn't a bad thing either, but I think I'm doing that as well.

So anyway, I don't mind the crazy response from fans. At the end of the day, it just means people are vested in the series and sucked into the story enough to garner a reaction... and really, that's more than I could have ever hoped for with this book. So it's all good.

That said, to reiterate about the interactions with Rick, Tyreese, and everyone else there it's just pure magic. I read these books now to see what happens next to these people because you've made me care about them. The zombies are an afterthought almost, because the real drama is what's happening behind those walls.

Heh--some issues they're certainly an afterthought for me!

Thanks again for taking the time to read this and I can't wait to see what Lori tells Rick in 38! I've got goosebumps already!

Sincerely,
Gabriel

Well, I hope it went the way you DIDN'T expect it to. Thanks for writing.

That's all the time we have here at Letter Hacks central. Be on the lookout yesterday for issue 41. We're incorporating brand new time machine technology to get you that issue BEFORE this one. This time I swear! We're on time, baby!!

Sigh.

See you next issue.

-Robert Kirkman

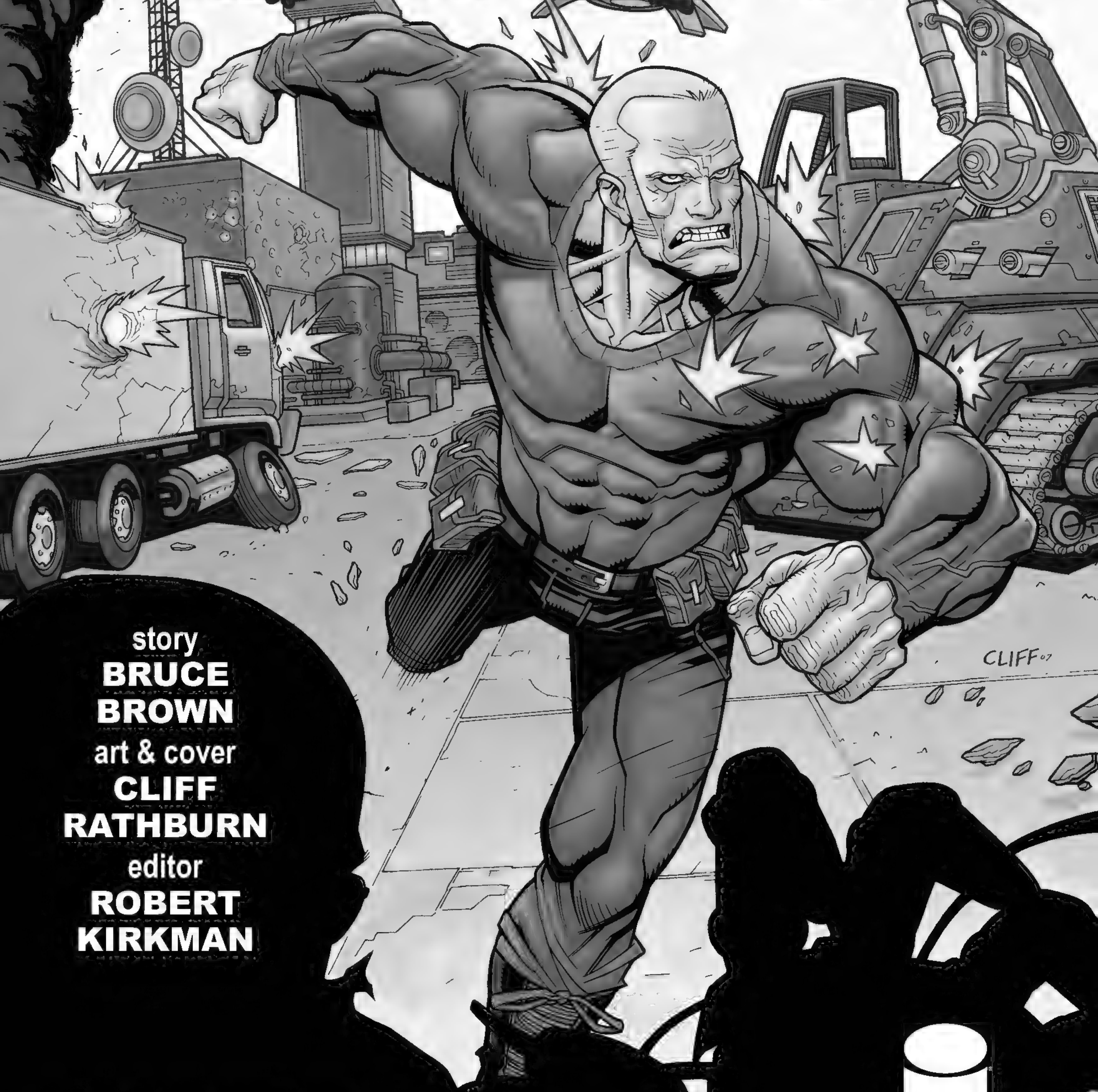
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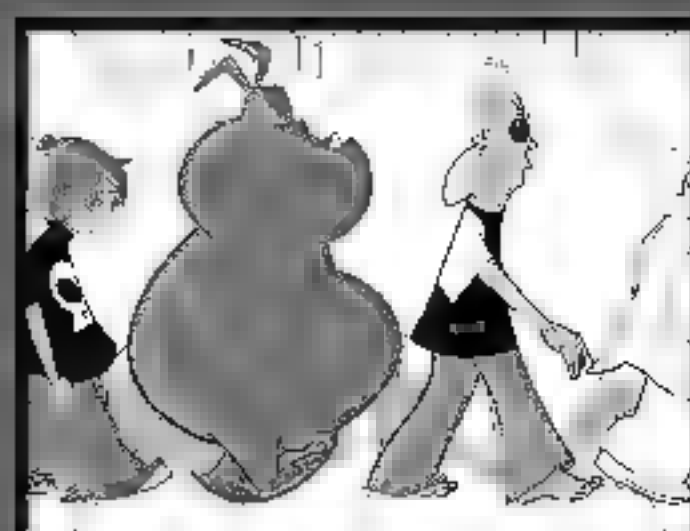
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BAD PLANET #3 (of 12)	<input type="checkbox"/>
BOMB QUEEN IV: SUICIDE BOMBER #1 (of 4)	<input type="checkbox"/>
BONDS #1 (of 3)	<input type="checkbox"/>
BRIT #1	<input type="checkbox"/>
CASANOVA #8	<input type="checkbox"/>
COMPASS #1	<input type="checkbox"/>
DUST #2 (of 2)	<input type="checkbox"/>
DYNAMO 5 #6	<input type="checkbox"/>
ELEPHANTMEN: WAR TOYS #1 (of 3)	<input type="checkbox"/>
FRANK FRAZETTA'S DEATH DEALER #5 (of 6)	<input type="checkbox"/>
GLISTER #1	<input type="checkbox"/>
GODLAND #19	<input type="checkbox"/>
GUTSVILLE #4 (of 6)	<input type="checkbox"/>
HIDING IN TIME #2 (of 4)	<input type="checkbox"/>
IN HER DARKEST HOUR (one-shot)	<input type="checkbox"/>
INVINCIBLE #46	<input type="checkbox"/>
KILLING GIRL #1 (of 5)	<input type="checkbox"/>
MADMAN ATOMIC COMICS #4	<input type="checkbox"/>
NOBLE CAUSES #31	<input type="checkbox"/>
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PVP #35	<input type="checkbox"/>
REPO #3 (of 5)	<input type="checkbox"/>
THE RIDE: DIE VALKYRIE #3 (of 3)	<input type="checkbox"/>
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SPAWN: GODSLAYER #4	<input type="checkbox"/>
SPECIAL FORCES #1 (of 6)	<input type="checkbox"/>
STEVE NILES' STRANGE CASES #1	<input type="checkbox"/>
STRANGE EMBRACE #3 (of 8)	<input type="checkbox"/>
WALKING DEAD #40	<input type="checkbox"/>

GRAND LARSENENY

It's hard not to go into full on huckster mode.

I mean, generally I'll rap here about some fine Image product coming out and how nifty it is. But over the last few years the sheer bulk of cool new books have become positively staggering.

It's gotten to the point where I really don't know where to begin!

Do I go on and on about 24Seven which is jam-packed with awe-inspiring robotic goodness from the likes of Ashley Wood, Gene Ha, Adam Hughes, Dave Johnson, Frazer Irving, Mike Oeming, Niko Henrichon, CB Cebulski, Ben Templesmith, Fabio Moon, Gabriel Ba, and more. Talk about an all-star line up! And these guys always deliver the goods! But that's not all—

Casanova #8 by Matt Fraction, Fabio Moon and Gabriel Ba hits the stands as well! Fans are ten-kinds of crazy for this super-charged spy book and it really kicks into high gear this ish! And if that wasn't enough there's:

Bill Sienkiewicz's surreal epic Stray Toasters heading your way! It's the greatest thing since sliced bread. Bill is one of the true masters of the medium and he's bringing a whole host of new and innovative books over to Image Comics and we couldn't be happier.

Then there's Glister #1 by Andi Watson! We've big Andi Watson fans around these parts. We loved "Breakfast After Noon," we dug "Slow News Day" and we went crazy for "Love Fights." We're pleased as all punch that he'll be spinning his next yarn here!

There's also BONDS #1 by the supremely talented Durwin Talon! You may know Durwin from his gorgeous covers on "Batman," "Skin Walkers," and "Queen and Country", but you haven't seen anything until you've read and experienced his awesome stories and interior art. You're going to be floored by this one, kids.

And how about Compass #1 by CB Cebulski, Akihide Yanagi and Ryusuke Hamamoto? CB Cebulski was a major force at mighty Marvel and he's been making waves here at Image of late. This latest offering is another outstanding offering from this master storyteller.

Then there's Elephantmen: War Toys #1 by Richard Starkings, Moritat and Boo Cook. I could write a string of columns about Elephantmen and the supremely talented Richard Starkings! I love Elephantmen like nobody's business and Moritat is a veritable force of nature!

But that's just the tip of the iceberg! There's Killing Girl #1 from Gray Area's own Glen Brunswick and Rocketo's Frank Espinosa! It's like a major motion picture in comic book form.

And then there's Sorrow #1 by Rick Remender, Seth Peck, Francesco Francavilla, and Kieron Dwyer! It's a harrowing horror mag that will have you balling like a baby.

And Steve Niles Strange Cases #1 from master storyteller Steve Niles accompanied by Dan Wickline and David Hartman. This book alone would top the list of most publishers' list of incredible titles.

And then there's Crimeland, a gripping original graphic novel by Felipe Ferreira, Ivan Brandon and Rafael Albuquerque with its mind-numbingly beautiful art. I can't say enough good things about this one! Felipe Ferreira and Rafael Albuquerque are relative newcomers with jaw-dropping talent at their disposal and Ivan Brandon just sweetens the deal.

Plus Robert Kirkman's BRIT starts his own ongoing series with Bruce Brown and Cliff Rathburn at the helm and Robert Kirkman cheering them along.

And then TECH JACKET makes its way into trade form, brought to you by Robert Kirkman (the guy that brings you the Walking Dead, Invincible, the Astounding Wolf-Man and Battle Pope) and E.J. Su (best known for his work on IDW's Transformers). It's a thing of unparalleled beauty.

And that's not to mention any of the outstanding ongoing titles we have winging your way this month! It's no wonder I can't decide what one mag to plug!

[Handwritten signature]



He's baaaack! Casanova Quinn returns for another go-around with series co-creator Matt Fraction at the helm. This time, he's joined by artist Fabio Moon! What terrible truth lurks inside Doctor Klockhammer's horror hospital? Read it and find out!

"The passion and dedication put on every single page of this comic is exactly what any comic reader would ever want." —*Brian Michael Bendis*

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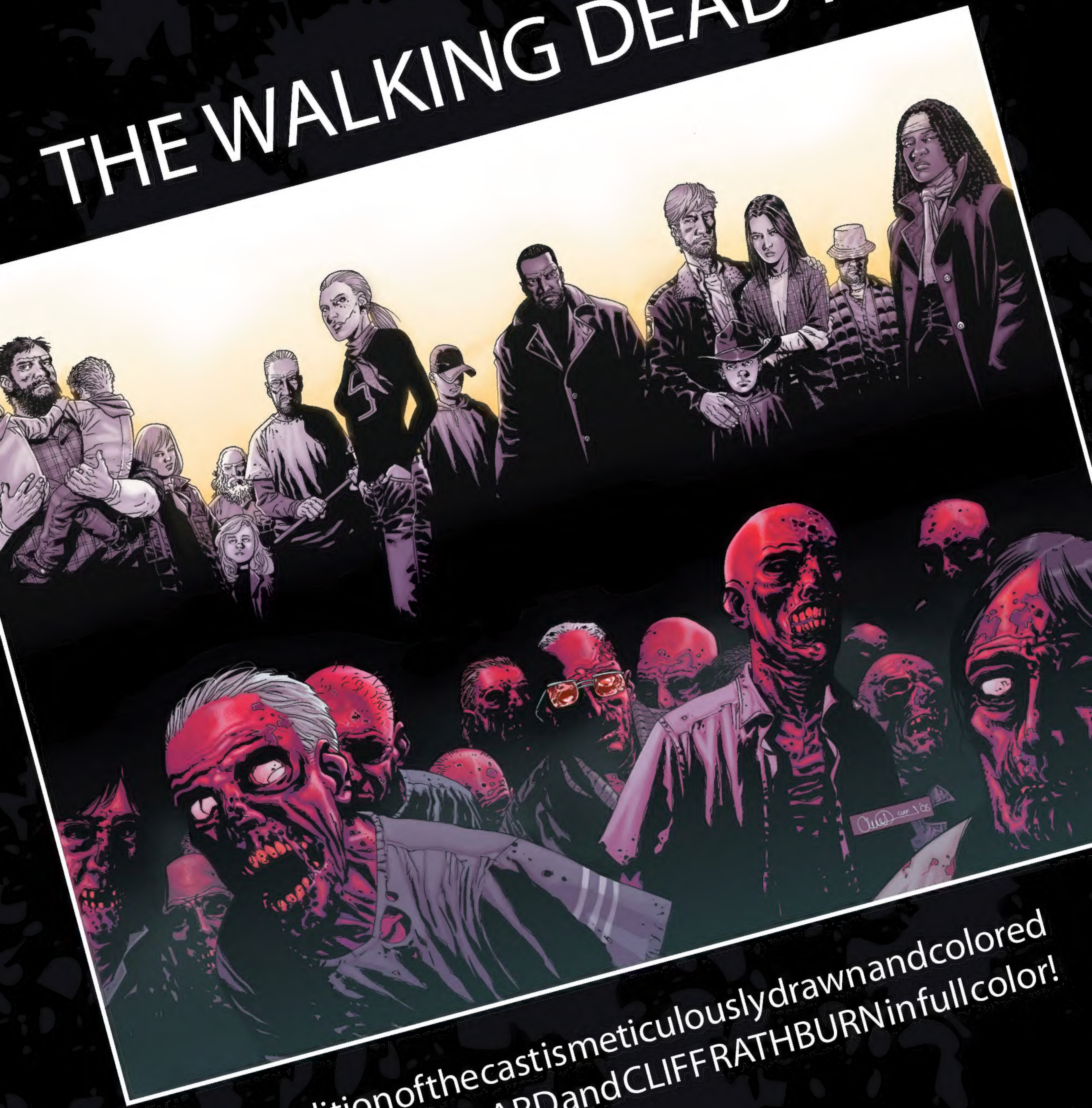
"This new style Mike's adopted is even prettier than his old one, and we may just all have to kill him now for making the rest of us look lazy." —*Mark Millar (Writer of Civil War)*

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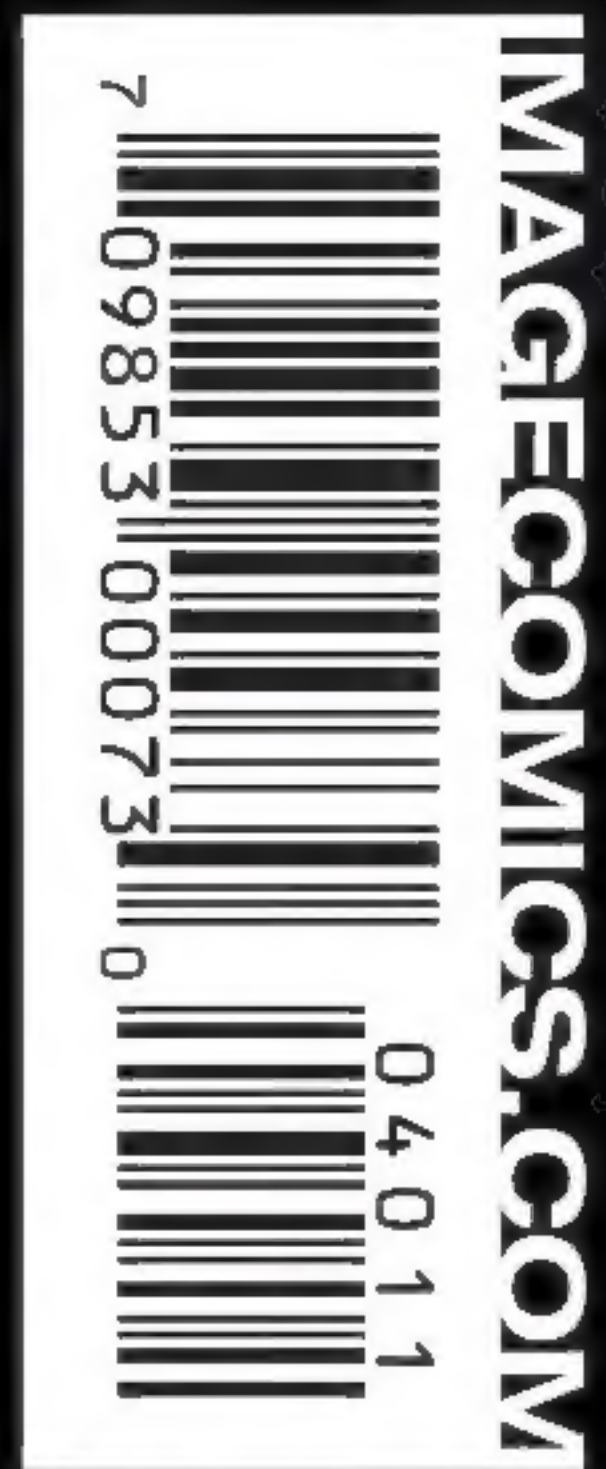
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